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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Lord God, our hope for years to come, as we approach Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish year, inspire us to strive to live Godly lives.

Lord, remind our lawmakers that You call each of us to flee from impurity and to live with integrity. Teach our Senators to accentuate the positive, to think thoughts that are pure, commendable, just, and honorable. May they permit You to cleanse them from every defilement, empowering them to live for You as they seek to do Your will.

Lord, create in us all clean hearts and renew a right spirit within us.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The majority leader is recognized.

PAIN-CAPABLE UNBORN CHILD PROTECTION BILL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, ask a family to show you the first picture of their child these days, and you are likely to get a black-and-white image with delicate fingers and tiny toes. Maybe it is their precious Christine. Maybe it is their little guy Brett. But one thing's for sure—that baby is their child.

Scientific advances like the sonogram are helping pull back the curtain on the mystery of life, they are helping foster a new spirit of compassionate protection for the most defenseless, and they are providing new opportunities to bridge old political divides.

We in this Chamber are never going to agree completely on the abortion question, but we should at least be able to agree that if an unborn child has reached the point where he or she can feel pain, that child's life deserves protection. Science is telling us that a child can reach this stage around 20 weeks—in other words, 5 months. This is when unborn children can react—even recoil—to stimuli an adult would recognize as painful. This is when doctors even administer fetal anesthesia during surgery.

As the New England Journal of Medicine study recently demonstrated, babies delivered at this age can survive outside the womb. So even if we differ on the larger abortion issue, can't we at least agree that children at this late stage of development deserve our protection? The American people seem to think so. Polls show that American women and American men oppose abortions after 5 months. The fact is that we are now one of just seven nations—among them countries such as North Korea and China—that allow elective abortions at such a late stage. Can't we do better than this as a country? The Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act would allow America to finally join the ranks of the most civilized nations on this issue.

Just this past weekend in Louisville, hundreds of Kentuckians gathered to spread a message of dignity and hope. They marched for those who may not meet them. They marched for those who may not hear them. But I hope Americans across the country, including participants in the 37th annual Walk for Life, will be encouraged to know that their voices of humanity and of respect are finally being heard again in a Senate under new leadership.

The executive director of Kentucky Right to Life said the issue before us is ''critical.'' She said, ''We have worked tirelessly to give these defenseless babies some protection.'' Several States have already taken action to protect these children. So has the House of Representatives. Now it is up to each of us to show where we stand. We are seeing how science is changing this debate.

So what I am asking every colleague is this: Look in your hearts and help us stand up for the most innocent life, help us protect that beating heart in that sonogram.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 3134 AND H.R. 3504

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there are two bills at the desk due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bills by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3134) to provide for a moratorium on Federal funding to Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc.

A bill (H.R. 3504) to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit a health care practitioner from failing to exercise the proper degree of care in the case of a child who survives an abortion or attempted abortion.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in order to place the bills on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call under rule XXII be waived with respect to the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to H.R. 36.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is said you cannot make the same mistake twice because the second time it is a choice, it is not a mistake. I repeat: It is said you cannot make the same mistake twice because the second time you make it, it is a choice. On every issue, Republicans are choosing to employ the same failed strategy they have tried time and time again. They are making choices. Over and over again, they drag Congress and the American people through votes that are nothing more than publicity stunts, solely designed to boost their conservative records.

Today we stand in the midst of yet another show vote designed to honor the political wish lists of extremists. Once again, Republicans have decided to place a woman's health at the center of their ideological campaign. We have seen this tactic before. It does not work.

Americans are tired of the Republican attacks on the health of women. Earlier this year, Republicans manipulated a bill. The bill was to help victims of human trafficking. They turned it into a political football by attaching ideological abortion riders. They have tried to repeatedly cut off funds for Planned Parenthood, a critical safety net provider for women.

Now today, in the face of a government shutdown, they decide to waste the Senate's time on a 20-week abortion ban. Every Senator in this body knows this bill is going nowhere. This attack is a waste of time. The bill on its merits is no good. It will accomplish nothing. By holding today's vote, the Republican leader is pandering to the rightwing extremists in his party who are willing to take our government hostage, trying to score nothing more than political points.

The time for partisan politics is over. The Senate, our government, cannot afford to be subjected to meaningless attacks on the health of women. We will be in session for only 2 more days this week. The House will not convene today or tomorrow. On October 1 the government will run out of money. With or without the stamp of approval Republicans are so desperately seeking, on October 1 the government will be out of money.

Republicans should end their partisan attack on women and join Democrats in carrying out one of our primary responsibilities as elected officials, as Members of Congress, and that is to keep the government doors open. Actions speak louder than words. These partisan attacks on the health of women, led by Republicans and the leader specifically today, will not only push Congress to the brink of another government shutdown—we are there. It would show once again that Republicans would rather attack women's health than keep their obligation to the American people.

On Thursday we are going to be in a very difficult time squeeze. We are going to have another vote, abortion related, on Planned Parenthood, and then we are going to have to try to figure out a way to fund the government. This responsibility is on the Republicans. They control the House and the Senate. It is not our responsibility. We will help in any way we can. We have not held up anything procedurally. We do not intend to do that. We want to move forward and get the government funded. But we are at a crossroads here. I am not sure we can make it with the time set because of all of these unnecessary votes that have been scheduled by the Republican leader these last couple of weeks. I hope we can make it and not have to see the government shut down again. But, you know, we have seen that before. The American people have been to that rodeo before. Who has suffered? The American people.

I would hope the Republican leader has a plan to help us get out of this morass they have created. We will do everything we can within reason to make sure the American people are treated fairly in the upcoming spending bills, but we have to get there by October 1.

Will the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

PAIN-CAPABLE UNBORN CHILD PROTECTION ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 36, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 230, H.R. 36, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to protect pain-capable unborn children, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 11 a.m. will be equally divided between the leaders or their designees.

The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to address the issue before the Senate. It relates to the divisive and controversial issue of abortion. It comes at an unusual moment in the history of the Congress.

This week, for the first time, the Pope will be addressing a joint session of Congress. It was 50 years ago when the first Pope visited the United States. The arrival of Pope Francis this week is a cause of great celebration to people from my State of Illinois and across this Nation because of their respect for his leadership of the Catholic Church. It calls to question, of course, the relationship between religion and our government.

This summer I finished a book called ''Mayflower,'' which told the story of the Pilgrims coming to the United States, settling in in our country, looking for a new opportunity but looking more than anything for freedom of religious belief. They were followed by scores and thousands of others who came for the same reason.

My mother was an immigrant to this country, brought here at the age of 2. Her mother brought her and her sister and brother to our shores for a variety of reasons. But there is one thing that sticks out in that journey. Up in my office I have something that my grandmother carried across the ocean from Lithuania to the United States. It was a Roman Catholic prayer book written in Lithuanian. It was contraband in 1911 in Lithuania for her to possess it because the Russians were in control and the Russians were imposing the orthodox religion and making it difficult to practice the Catholic religion. I never knew my grandmother, but she was one brave lady to bring three kids across the ocean and stick in her bag that prayer book which meant so much to her, that prayer book which she could use in the United States of America without the government telling her she could not.

We have tried to strike the right balance between religion and our democracy from the beginning. I believe our Founding Fathers got it right. They said three things in the Constitution about religion: first, that each of us would have the freedom to worship as we choose or to choose not to worship; second, that the government would not choose a religion and that we would not have an official government religion; and third, that there would be no religious test for public office in America.

I thought those were settled principles, but this Presidential campaign suggests otherwise. We had the outrageous suggestion by a Republican Presidential candidate this last weekend that a Muslim should never serve as President of the United States. I would think that a man of his background and learning would at least take the time to understand our Constitution and the express provision which says that he is wrong, that there will never by a religious litmus test to serve in public office in the United States.

And now, this week on the floor of the Senate, we will have two votes on the issue of abortion. There was a time when this issue came before us frequently—not so much lately. It is a divisive and controversial issue; that is for sure. But this week the Republican Senate leadership has allowed two of their Presidential candidates to raise this issue on the floor of the Senate. It is no coincidence this issue comes before us the same week the Pope, the leader of the Catholic Church, will be addressing a joint session of Congress. It is more than a coincidence.

This particular bill relates to when a person can terminate a pregnancy. For 47 years, if I am not mistaken—maybe I have that calculation slightly wrong—we have had Supreme Court guidance on when the government can play a role in the decision about the termination of a pregnancy. Now there is an effort on the floor of the Senate to change that basic guidance from the Roe v. Wade decision. Each time we step into this question, into something which seems as clear as ''at 20 weeks we will draw a line and after that there cannot be a legal termination of pregnancy,'' we find we are walking into an area of uncertainty.

I remember meeting many years ago, when we were debating this issue, a woman from Illinois. She was from the town of Naperville. In 1996 she told me a harrowing story of how legislation such as the bill before us would have impacted her. She learned late in her pregnancy that the child she was carrying could not survive outside the womb. Her doctors diagnosed her baby with at least nine major anomalies, including a fluid-filled cranium with no brain tissue. Sadly, she also had underlying medical conditions—personal conditions—that complicated her pregnancy even more. Doctors were concerned that if she went through with the pregnancy at that point, she ran the risk of never having another baby. With tears in her eyes, she told me how she and her husband agonized over the news and eventually decided it was best for them and their other children to terminate that pregnancy.

If the bill before us today—the 20-week abortion bill—had been the law of the land back then, sadly it would have jeopardized and endangered her health.

Well, 18 years later she came back to see me. I learned she was able to do what was best for her family in terminating that pregnancy. That was her decision with her doctor and her husband. But she was given a second chance. Soon after, she became pregnant again. This time she was thankful to give birth to a healthy baby boy. When she came to see me, she told me about her son Nick. She said he had become a star football player and had a bright future ahead of him.

If this bill had been the law of the land, this woman in Illinois—and others like her—would not even have had the choice to terminate a pregnancy for her own health protection and for the opportunity to have another baby. That is the challenge we face when we try to spell out in law all of the medical possibilities, limiting opportunities and decisions to be made by individuals under the most heartbreaking circumstances.

This bill has other issues. The fact that the rape and incest exceptions, which have largely been built into the law to this point, would be changed dramatically by this law raises questions as well. There is a requirement, as I understand it, in this law that victims of incest would have had to report to a law enforcement agency that crime of incest before they would even be able to terminate a pregnancy under these circumstances. That is not even realistic—to think some young child in a household, who has been exploited by another member of the family, would think to go to a law enforcement agency and report that other member of her family before they could qualify to terminate a pregnancy in this circumstance.

That shows the extremes this bill goes to. I hope we will defeat this measure. I sincerely hope the other Republican Presidential candidate, who is going to try to shut down the government over the funding of Planned Parenthood later in the week, does not prevail either. We need to move on to find other issues—not divisive issues but issues we can build a bipartisan consensus on to make this a stronger country.

We need to address the issue of funding our government and to accept the responsibilities to move forward in a bipartisan fashion. This bill does not do that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, before we vote on whether to proceed to H.R. 36, I want to respond to a couple of arguments made by a Democratic Senator yesterday.

First, that Democratic Senator quoted Hal Lawrence of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists for the proposition that a 20-week fetus is not viable. The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the group Dr. Lawrence represents, has long opposed this legislation.

According to the Senator I am confronting on this issue, Dr. Lawrence said the following on May 13, 2015:

> In no way, shape or form is a 20-week fetus viable. There is no evidence anywhere of a 20-week fetus surviving, even with intensive medical care.

But as explained by the Washington Post Fact Checker of May 26 of this year, Dr. Lawrence's statement is simply incorrect when applied to H.R. 36. The bill uses a method of calculating fetal age that is based on the day that fertilization actually occurred. The legislation would protect the unborn beginning at 20 weeks after fertilization, which is the same as 22 weeks of pregnancy, also known as 22-week gestational age. Gestational age is a measure of calculating the unborn baby's age that relies on the date of the mother's last normal menstrual period.

It is well established that babies can survive at 22-week gestational age. As noted in the Washington Post, for example: ''That babies can survive at 22 weeks gestational age has been known for 15 years.''

Perhaps Dr. Lawrence was confused about what H.R. 36 would accomplish. The Washington Post Fact Checker article sets the record straight.

Second, the Senator I am referring to said earlier that abortions past 20-week fetal age are extraordinarily rare. Some jurisdictions with the most lax abortion policies don't even collect data on the stage of pregnancy when an abortion is performed, while other jurisdictions may have reporting requirements but are not really enforcing those reporting requirements. Because data on late-term abortions is not widely available, it is hard to know what hard evidence really exists to support the claim. We do know that several hundred doctors, and well over 200 facilities across the United States, offer abortions after 20 weeks of fetal age.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the Washington Post article I earlier referred to.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, May 26, 2015]

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON MEASURING FETAL AGE AND THE '20-WEEK ABORTION'

(By Michelle Ye Hee Lee)

> ''In no way, shape or form is a 20-week fetus viable. There's no evidence of a 20-week fetus surviving, even with intensive medical care.''—American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Executive Vice President Hal Lawrence, quoted in a news article, May 13, 2015

Several readers requested The Fact Checker to examine claims related to the Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, recently passed by the House. This bill is commonly referred to as the ''20-week abortion ban.''

The abortion debate is fraught with rhetoric that cannot be easily fact-checked. But a reader pointed us to the quote above and asked whether a new study on the viability of 22-week fetuses can be applied to 20-week fetuses, when using a different method to count gestational age. To add to the confusion, states vary in their definitions for gestational age. The quote above is one example of several instances in recent media coverage that related to definitions of gestational age.

This is a technical, but important, part of the bill. The little-known difference between two methods of counting gestational age is contributing to inconsistent media coverage, and could mislead the public, parents and providers about the bill's provisions.

So what exactly is going on?

THE FACTS

The Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act bans late-term abortions after the midpoint of a woman's pregnancy, and before the fetus typically is considered viable to live outside of the womb. The age of viability has

been pegged at 24 to 28 weeks. Proponents argue an abortion ban at younger than 24 weeks, saying fetuses can feel pain before then—a claim based in complex science and disputed by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. (Supporters point to various studies related to fetal development, compiled here.)

A new study published in the New England Journal of Medicine on May 7 examined how hospitals differ in whether and how they treat extremely premature babies, starting at 22 weeks. Proponents of the bill say this study, funded by the National Institutes of Health, shows that the babies who would be saved through the 20-week abortion ban could now be considered viable. Some media reports also echoed the same conclusions.

Sound confusing? The distinction is this: The bill defines the age of the fetus as ''post-fertilization age,'' calculated from the moment of conception. This is different from the widely-accepted definition used by medical professionals and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, counting the fetus age from the first day of the pregnant woman's last menstrual period (''LMP'').

Fertilization typically happens about two weeks after the first day of LMP. The idea is that it is difficult to know exactly when you became pregnant, but you know when you started your last period. That is why the bill's supporters say the 20-week age measured from fertilization essentially is the LMP-measured age of 22 weeks.

The bill's definition is a more technical and accurate measure, said Michael Woeste, House Judiciary Committee spokesman. He noted an excerpt in The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology, arguing that the LMP method is error prone partly because ''it depends on the mother's memory of an event that occurred several weeks before she realized she was pregnant'' and that ''the day fertilization occurs is the most accurate reference point for estimating age.''

Lawrence's quote at the top of this fact check comes from a statement during a recent media call. (The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, or ACOG, opposed the bill.) He was referring to the 20-week LMP age, not the 20-week post-fertilization age.

The rest of his statement during the call explains his point further and how it ties in with the legislation (and also wrote an op-ed about it in Time):

''Now, I'd like to talk a bit about why supporters of a 20-week abortion ban are, quite simply, wrong. There is no medical milestone associated with 20 weeks. Gestation is a gradual process, and it can vary depending on the circumstances, such as the woman's health.

''But still, even accounting for this, the 20-week mark is just not notable from a fetal development standpoint. More than 40 years ago, the Supreme Court stipulated that abortion is legal until a fetus is viable. Well, in no way, shape or form is a 20-week fetus viable. There is no evidence anywhere of a 20-week fetus surviving, even with intensive medical care.

''Unfortunately, some advocates of abortion bans are pointing to a new study, just published last week, that they claim heralds 22 weeks as being the new point of viability. They suggest that we might someday reach viability at 20 weeks. It is essential that we address that now, before this becomes another myth about abortion that is accepted as reality.''

We spoke with the main authors of the study, Matthew Rysavy and Dr. Edward Bell of University of Iowa. They collected data for nearly 5,000 infants born between 22 and 27 weeks of gestation (using LMP method) and did not have abnormalities at birth. These babies are extremely pre-term, as full term is considered at 39 to 40 weeks, according to ACOG guidelines.

Researchers found that 22 percent of the babies born at 22 weeks received active treatment, and hospitals varied in their whether and how they gave treatment to babies born between 22 and 27 weeks. There were 78 babies born at 22 weeks who received aggressive treatment. Among them, 18 of them survived (23 percent) to toddler age. Seven (9 percent) of them did not have severe or moderate impairment by the time they were toddlers.

That babies can survive at 22 weeks is not a new finding; it has been known for 15 years, Rysavy said. The point of the study was to highlight differences in practices and outcomes between hospitals, he said. Many factors, including gestational age, influence how well a baby does: ''Our paper wasn't exactly intended for identifying which infants would do well.''

The Fact Checker asked if, using the ''post-fertilization'' age definition in the bill, their findings can carry over to babies at 20 weeks old from the point of conception. Bell and Rysavy said that would be ''terribly confusing'' to the public, pregnant women and even to politicians. Bell said the LMP method is used around the world, and that the time of conception accurately cannot be ascertained.

''You cannot redefine gestational age based on conception. . . . The new terms are politician terms. They have no relevance at all to medicine or biology. They're just going to confuse everybody,'' Bell said. ''They have the right to do that for the purpose of making laws, but to me, it just looks like an attempt to obfuscate and create confusion. We already have a well-established definition of the length of pregnancy that has worked just fine, for generations, has been used forever.''

Rysavy also sent us this diagram, of the American Academy of Pediatrics' terminology for age during the perinatal period:

ACOG recommends using LMP and updating the due date with other measures, such as ultrasounds, since women may have irregular cycles and there is variability in how long a fertilized egg becomes implanted in the uterus (thus beginning pregnancy). Lawrence, in a statement, said: ''The fact that federal legislation is basing restrictions on reproductive care based on a non-medical calculation of pregnancy is evidence of what happens when lawmakers try to legislate women's health.''

THE BOTTOM LINE

New research confirmed that 22-week fetuses, measured from the first day of the pregnant woman's last menstrual cycle, can survive. Babies born before that age did not survive. So, Lawrence is correct that 20-week fetuses, measured from the first day of the pregnant woman's last menstrual cycle, are not viable. He is incorrect when using the definition in the Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act.

The Fact Checker takes no stance on which definition should be used. However, we want to set the record straight for the public and the media. This is a technical point over how gestational age is calculated. But it is important, as it has contributed to some misleading headlines, lack of context in news coverage and general confusion in the public debate. It also has contributed to the rhetoric on both sides; the difference between the two definitions has not been clear in much of the news reporting.

In many way, the debate is similar to how budget figures can vary dramatically depending on the baseline that is used. Reporters need to specify exactly what method of measuring the pregnancy is being used, as the difference is not trivial.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I am opposed to late-term abortions and would support legislation to ban them except in unusual circumstances. A carefully drawn, short list of exceptions to apply in those rare cases should have been included in this bill. Regrettably, the bill before us provides no exception for when the physical health of the mother is at risk of serious harm, the most glaring deficiency in this legislation.

Let me give just three examples of devastating conditions that could threaten the physical health of a pregnant woman. An extremely serious condition triggered by pregnancy in some women is preeclampsia, which tends to develop after the 20th week of pregnancy. This condition can lead to serious, long-term health consequences for a woman, including liver and kidney problems, vision disturbances, seizures and strokes.

Another example would be a woman diagnosed with cancer who requires chemotherapy and radiation but cannot be treated while pregnant. A massive infection, such as severe sepsis, is yet another case of a grave illness that could cause grievous harm for a pregnant woman and to her physical health.

Almost every country in Europe that limits late-term abortions allows for exceptions for the physical health of the mother. Like these European countries, States such as Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi, and others that ban late-term abortions provide an exception for the health as well as the life of the woman. But the bill before us does not.

I have advocated that we add language that would provide an exception when the woman is at serious risk of grievous injury to her physical health. This is an appropriately high standard to meet, but one that would allow a woman to terminate her pregnancy when the alternative is serious harm to her physical health.

Under this bill, a doctor who performs such an abortion after 20 weeks to prevent grievous physical injury to the pregnant woman would be subject to criminal penalties of up to 5 years in prison.

Do we really want to make a criminal out of a physician who is trying to prevent a woman with preeclampsia from suffering damage to her kidneys or liver or having a stroke or seizures? Do we want the threat of prison for a doctor who knows that his pregnant patient needs chemotherapy or radiation treatments? If a woman has the terrible misfortune to have a serious infection of amniotic fluid that threatens her physical health and her ability to have children in the future, do we want her doctor to be unable to perform an abortion because he faces the prospect of years in prison if he terminates her pregnancy?

The way the rape and incest exceptions to this bill are drafted is also problematic. I do not question the good motives of the sponsors of this bill, as I share their goal of prohibiting late-term abortions. My point, however, is that all of these language problems could be solved, and then we might well be able to enact a law that would accomplish the goal of ending late-term abortions except in those unusual cases where an exception is warranted. Therefore, I shall cast my vote in opposition to this well-meaning but flawed bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I am a proud pro-life Senator, and I stand on the floor of the Senate today with a gnawing feeling in the pit of my stomach. It is a feeling that comes with the knowledge that over the past 40 years more than 50 million Americans have not had the chance to have their feet touch the soil of our country. That is why I am thankful for the opportunity we have this week here in the Senate—an opportunity to celebrate life and to protect life, God's most amazing gift of all.

I am proud to have joined my colleague and senior Senator from my State, LINDSEY GRAHAM, in introducing this version of the pain-capable legislation in the Senate.

The studies are very, very clear that this legislation can save more than 18,000 lives each and every year. That is right, 18,000 lives each and every year. We aren't talking about anything other than the results of sound science. And because of that sound science, we know that at approximately 5 months babies can feel pain. We know that if a baby were to need prenatal surgery at that age, they would be given anesthesia. Why? Because that little life—that little life—feels pain.

Yesterday, Senator BLUNT gave name after name after name of babies born around 5 months who have gone on to live healthy and full lives. This is not about pro-choice or pro-life. It is simply about protecting ten fingers, ten toes, and one beating heart, and bringing the amazing gift of life.

In our world, out of nearly 200 nations, only seven allow abortions on demand after 20 weeks—only seven out of 200 nations. Who is among the seven nations? China, North Korea, Vietnam, and the United States. Really?

So while I may stand here today with a gnawing in my stomach, I also stand with hope—hope that we can take a massive step forward in protecting life—18,000 lives a year—by passing this important legislation.

America is truly a great nation. So let's improve our reputation and not lower our expectations because, as John Winthrop said nearly 400 years ago, ''We shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us.''

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all time spent in a quorum call before the 11 a.m. vote be equally charged to each side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, we are about a week away from the deadline to keep the Federal Government open. Our National Highway System, which at one time was a matter of great pride, will soon run out of money. The nominations of 16 consensus judicial nominees that came out of committee with bipartisan support are languishing on the Senate floor. We're not allowed to have a vote on the Senate floor about them even though, in many cases, they are courts with judicial emergencies. There is still strong support in the Senate for passing meaningful immigration reform as we did 2 years ago by a 2-to-1 margin, Republicans and Democrats. Now, those are just a few of the pressing issues that the Senate should have been working on this month. Instead, the Senate Republican leadership has wasted 2 weeks on political show votes. And with a government shutdown looming, Senate Republicans plan to use this week to continue their relentless attack on women's health care.

Republicans brought us to this brink just 2 years ago, and, once again, they are trying to use Americans' access to health care as leverage in a fight over funding the Federal Government. This time, though, Republicans also seem intent on holding hostage the constitutional rights of women as part of this political exercise. Frankly, what I hear when I go home is the American people, including women across this country, have had enough.

It is incredible to me that, in 2015, we are debating Federal funding for one of the Nation's largest and most trusted providers of basic health care. For nearly 100 years, Planned Parenthood has provided women's health care and has enjoyed the leadership and support of great Americans like the civil rights leader, Rosa Parks, who was a member of the organization's board of advocates.

Over 90 percent of the services Planned Parenthood provides are preventative, including annual health exams, cervical and breast cancer screenings, and HIV screenings for millions of American women, men, and young people. It is these preventive services and only these preventive services that are paid for with Federal funds.

Republicans are focused on abortion services that are not paid for with Federal dollars and are otherwise only a very small part of what Planned Parenthood does. Republicans say it is because of recently released videos that purport to show wrongdoing on the part of Planned Parenthood. But these surreptitiously recorded videos were heavily edited in a misleading way and generated by an organization formed with an agenda to end safe and legal abortion in our country.

In reality, this partisan debate is nothing more than an opportunity for Senate Republicans to wage their personal opposition to a woman's decision to access safe and legal abortions in this country. They are entitled to their own beliefs. But missing from these arguments are the stories of women across this country whose health and lives are at stake when politicians play doctor and tell women they cannot make their own health care decisions. That is exactly the situation we face with the bill the Senate will vote on today, which puts women's health at risk by imposing a nationwide ban on abortions at 20 weeks or more and criminalizing the doctors who care for them.

The bill before us is as unconstitutional as it is extreme. Federal courts have repeatedly struck down similar State 20-week bans as unconstitutional. Just last year, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to review a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision permanently blocking Arizona's 20-week-ban law. And this bill makes no exception where the health of the woman is at risk. The exceptions it does include are severely limited. It is only if a woman's health has deteriorated to the point at which she might die is she allowed to have an abortion under the bill's exception for a woman's life.

The bill's so-called rape exception is, in reality, an overwhelming bureaucracy requiring survivors to jump through hoop after hoop, such as filing police reports or going to mandatory counseling. We should not be forcing these survivors to relive their trauma again and again before they can access abortion services. How many incest victims do you think are going to be able to do that, going through all these bureaucratic hoops? Doctors providing safe abortion care who fail to comply with all of the bill's requirements would face up to 5 years of jail time.

Now, it has all these dangerous provisions, but you know what is even more shocking? This bill has had no committee process in the Senate. There have been no Senate hearings on this bill, not one single Republican chairman of any committee in the Senate has held a hearing. There has been no debate in the Judiciary Committee. We've not had a chance to hear from women and doctors about the care this bill would criminalize. I know last Congress, the current majority leader, who is a friend of mine, repeatedly urged the Senate to follow ''regular order'' on all legislation. On this bill, there was no regular order. It was brought straight to the floor. This is not a political point; it is about what process in this body represents. It gives Senators the opportunity to grapple with

the real impact of legislation like this. That is what was lost here.

In Vermont, I witnessed the devastating effect of restricting women's access to safe and legal abortion. I say this, Mr. President, because I am the only Member of the U.S. Senate who has ever prosecuted somebody in an abortion case. When I was a young prosecutor in Vermont, I was called to a hospital to see a young woman who nearly died from hemorrhaging caused by a botched abortion. She was unable to obtain a safe abortion in my state because it was illegal. I prosecuted the man who had arranged for her unsafe and illegal abortion that nearly killed her.

Don't talk about hypotheticals. I saw the tragic impact that the lack of safe legal abortion care had on women and families in my state, and so I talked to doctors about challenging Vermont's law. In that case, Beecham v. Leahy, the conservative Vermont Supreme Court called out the hypocrisy of a statute whose stated purpose was to protect women's health, rightly asking, ''Where is that concern for the health of the pregnant woman when she is denied the advice and assistance of her doctor?'' One year before Roe v. Wade, the Vermont Supreme Court, all members of it were Republicans, ruled that protecting women's health required access to safe and legal abortion services, ensuring that women in our state would no longer be subjected to back alley abortions. We should not forget that this history was once reality for so many women in our Nation. That is why I supported our Vermont Supreme Court's decision that we should not deny women's health by denying access to safe and legal abortion services.

As we consider the bill before us today, we should also remember what Beecham v. Leahy and, a year later, when Roe made clear which should be crystal clear for all of us here today in 2015, abortion is an extremely difficult and personal choice. And if we truly want to reduce abortions—as I do, and I suspect most of us do, maybe all of us do—we should be making sure that family planning services are universally available. We should support organizations like Planned Parenthood that can provide family planning services, especially in rural areas and elsewhere where they might not be available, because that, in itself, will lower the number of abortions.

I oppose the bill pending before us. I hope that Senators on both sides of the aisle will do the same. And this Senate, which I love, ought to turn away from show votes and start leading responsibly so that we can avoid yet another government shutdown with billions upon billions of dollars that would be wasted.

Now, some want a shutdown because they think it might help their campaigns or their press availability. None of them are going to tell the press when they have that shutdown how many billions of dollars of taxpayers' money they waste by doing it. So let us remember again, the Vermont Supreme Court, at that time a very conservative Supreme Court, in the case of Beecham v. Leahy, when they called out the hypocrisy of a statute whose stated purpose was to protect women's health, said, ''Where is that concern for the health of the pregnant woman when she's denied the advice and assistance of her doctor?''

Let's stop the show voting; let's stop playing for whatever group we want to raise money from for a campaign or for the Presidency by forcing a shutdown. And let's think about the taxpayers of this country which are going to try to force a shutdown, then let's put a dollar figure on it and say how much the grandstanding cost. It will cost into the billions and billions of dollars and makes this great nation look foolish around the world.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 230, H.R. 36, to amend title 18, United States Code, to protect pain-capable unborn children, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, Joni Ernst, Mike Lee, Mike Rounds, Chuck Grassley, Tim Scott, Patrick J. Toomey, John Boozman, David Perdue, Johnny Isakson, James M. Inhofe, James E. Risch, Steve Daines, Roy Blunt, Roger F. Wicker, John Thune, James Lankford.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 36, an act to amend title 18, United States Code, to protect pain-capable unborn children, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 268 Leg.]

YEAS—54

Alexander	Enzi	Moran
Ayotte	Ernst	Paul
Barrasso	Fischer	Perdue
Blunt	Flake	Portman
Boozman	Gardner	Risch
Burr	Graham	Roberts
Capito	Grassley	Rounds
Casey	Hatch	Rubio
Cassidy	Heller	Sasse
Coats	Hoeven	Scott
Cochran	Inhofe	Sessions
Corker	Isakson	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	Manchin	Toomey
Daines	McCain	Vitter
Donnelly	McConnell	Wicker

NAYS—42

Baldwin	Heinrich	Nelson
Bennet	Heitkamp	Peters
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reed
Booker	Kaine	Reid
Brown	King	Sanders
Cantwell	Kirk	Schatz
Cardin	Klobuchar	Schumer
Carper	Leahy	Shaheen
Collins	Markey	Stabenow
Coons	McCaskill	Tester
Durbin	Menendez	Udall
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murphy	Wyden

NOT VOTING—4

Boxer	Murray
Murkowski	Warner

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). On this vote, the yeas are 54, the nays are 42.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is not agreed to.

VOTE EXPLANATION

● Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, today the Senate voted on the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, H.R. 36. While I was unable to vote today, I would have opposed this bill, which would have amended the Criminal Code to prohibit any person from performing an abortion after 20 weeks. As the father of three daughters, I believe that a woman's health, not politicians in Washington, should drive important medical decisions. It is critical that we as a nation continue to have a meaningful and respectful dialogue about an issue we all care about deeply, and I do not believe that this bill would have advanced that dialogue.●

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to the motion to reconsider the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 2685.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I move to reconsider the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 2685.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the time until 12 noon be equally divided prior to the cloture vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, almost exactly a year ago, President Obama addressed the Nation and declared his resolve to degrade and destroy ISIL. I will speak more on that in just a moment, but there are two lines in that speech of particular relevance to the vote we are about to take.

This is what President Obama had to say:

> As Commander-in-Chief, my highest priority is the security of the American people [and] our own safety, our own security, depends upon our willingness to do what it takes to defend this nation and uphold the values that we stand for.

He was certainly right. It does. And doing what it takes requires many things—everything from amphibious shipping, Joint Strike Fighters, and forward presence, to preserving our gains in Afghanistan and investing in the naval systems required to balance against Chinese expansion in Asia.

So when President Obama sent us a budget request asking for $612 billion in defense spending, we worked across the aisle to craft a bipartisan appropriations bill at that level. Democrats hailed the defense spending as a win-win and a victory for their States. They voted to pass it out of the Appropriations Committee. This is how the Defense appropriations bill came out of the Appropriations Committee: 27 to 3.

But then, as the Washington Post put it, Democrats ''decided to block all spending bills starting with the defense appropriations measure'' as part of some ''filibuster summer'' strategy designed to pump more taxpayer cash into Washington bureaucracies such as the IRS. The same President who had lectured the Nation about doing ''what it takes to defend this nation'' seemed content to have our military held hostage to the whims of the far left. The White House cheered as they voted repeatedly to block the bill that funds pay raises and medical care for our troops. It was outrageous then, and it is outrageous now.

China is deploying ships to the Bering Sea and to the coast of Alaska. Russia's military is positioning itself in Syria to attack anti-regime forces under the guise of a counterterrorism campaign. Refugees are pouring forth in the thousands, causing instability in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Europe. And 1 year after the President's speech, ISIL is consolidating its gains within Syria and Iraq as it demonstrates an agility and an operational flexibility that threaten our country and our national security interests.

The sad lesson of the last 7 years is that our global conventional drawdown and withdrawal from the Middle East emboldened Russia and China. Our ambitious train-and-equip and economy-of-force programs to train combat forces within Yemen, Afghanistan, and Iraq and our program to train an opposition to fight within Syria—all have failed to defeat the enemy. And Iran now appears free under the President's deal to inspect its own suspected nuclear site and to funnel more cash to Hezbollah.

If President Obama is committed to protecting the American people, he will convince his party to end its blockade of funding our military. We are going to give our Democratic friends that chance again in a few moments.

The goal of Democrats' ''filibuster summer'' was to force Congress back to the brink. They have succeeded in doing that. They think it is the only way to force America to accept their demands for more debt and more bureaucracy. But it is time Democrats started considering the needs of our country, not the wants of the far left or the IRS. Ending their blockade of funding for our military at a time of significant international threats would show they are ready to start putting Americans first.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we have voted on this before. It seems that is what we have been doing the last few weeks—revoting. Vote once and vote again. The results are going to be the same. We have made it clear we are not going to proceed to appropriations bills under the Republicans' partisan budget. We have 12 appropriations bills, not 1. We have 12.

We seek a budget agreement that fairly prevents mindless sequester cuts to defense and to the middle class. I am gratified that our votes on this measure have caused the Republican leader to acknowledge publicly that we need to negotiate an end to this fiscal crisis that has been created by the Republicans.

As for this upcoming vote, there is no reason for Senators to change their votes from how they voted earlier this year. This is yet another case of the Republicans just wasting time rather than addressing the real deal. Another revote.

We read in this morning's papers that the Republican leader intends to bring a clean continuing resolution before the Senate later this week. Congratulations. We appreciate that very much. But bringing it to a conclusion now is certainly very important because we are running out of time. The end of the fiscal year is now. On September 30, we need more money or the government will shut down. It is not as though we are making up something. They have done it before. And who has been hurt? The American middle class more than anyone else.

I hope we will just move on to the business at hand. The business at hand is to make sure the government does not close. We have cooperated every way we can. We are not asking for revotes on tearing down the tree numerous times. We have agreed to that. We are not trying in any way to procedurally stop us from moving to important funding measures. So I hope we can move on past this as quickly as possible.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

PAIN-CAPABLE UNBORN CHILD PROTECTION BILL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, unfortunately, our Democratic friends have now blocked another vital piece of legislation from moving forward by a vote of 54 to 42. The cloture vote on the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act has failed on that cloture vote. But I want to point out to our colleagues that this is not the end of this discussion. This is the beginning of the discussion once again.

I would point out that over the years we have actually been making some progress in favor of an agenda that favors life. In 2007 eight Senate Republicans opposed defunding Planned Parenthood, by 2011 five Senate Republicans opposed defunding Planned Parenthood, and in August just one Senator opposed it by voting to filibuster the bill. Last time we had zero Democratic Senators vote on such a measure. In August we got two.

The pain-capable bill that was blocked by Senate Democrats last year, of course, is what we just voted on again. Today we had an opportunity to be on the record and advocate for what is a top priority for pro-life groups.

There is legislation that has passed in the House of Representatives—namely, the born-alive piece of legislation, which really shouldn't divide Congress the way perhaps the defunding of Planned Parenthood bill has because at some point, whether you are pro-choice or pro-life, hopefully we can agree that a child who is basically grown to full-term in their mother should be protected from the abortion industries. I think we are going to have other opportunities to vote on that issue.

The Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act is really a moral imperative for our Nation. It says a lot about who we are as a country. This Chamber just had the opportunity to send a clear message that America is a nation that seeks to advance a culture of life and opportunity for everyone, particularly those who are the most vulnerable. As a father of two daughters, I don't understand the rationale of some of my colleagues on the other side. Do they believe there should be no limitation on access to abortion at all? No limit?

Well, we will have an opportunity for another vote that perhaps will give them a chance to go on record on the born-alive bill that passed the House of Representatives last week. Unfortunately, I think it appears that by blocking this vote, some of our colleagues were simply unable to cast aside the pressures of special interest

groups to take a stand for life. But it is important to note for pro-life Members such as myself that protecting the sanctity of life is an ongoing mission, and it doesn't end with this one vote.

Mr. President, briefly on another matter, we will shortly consider or reconsider another vote that should be a clear-cut issue. This vote would make sure that our military has what they need in order to protect our country and deal with the rising and diverse threats to national security occurring around the world. This will most pointedly help our troops maintain their status as the greatest military. The Defense appropriations bill includes simple initiatives that make sense and serve our troops well, such as giving them a well-deserved pay raise.

I think it is worth reminding those here today that this will be the second opportunity to move this legislation forward. Earlier, our colleagues across the aisle blocked this Defense appropriations bill that provides critical funding for our troops and refused to allow it to move forward. That legislation, as the majority leader pointed out, was voted overwhelmingly out of the Appropriations Committee in June with the support of many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who then turned and voted against it on the floor. I guess, in the famous words of John Kerry, they were for it before they were against it.

So the bill we will be considering and voting on shortly is not a piece of partisan legislation, but holding up this legislation is unfortunately indicative of a larger strategy of keeping the Senate tied in knots and making it impossible for it to function as intended. If the goal is to stymie real progress, I would have to congratulate our friends across the aisle. But unfortunately they have taken as a hostage in this partisan political fight the very military which they claim to support and which I believe they do support, but their vote certainly does not indicate that when they vote against funding our troops.

I would point out that in 2013 the Democratic leader himself advocated for something we call regular order around here when it comes to setting our Nation's fiscal policy.

Fortunately, this year, under the new majority, we were able to pass a budget for the first time since 2009. But then what should have happened after that is the Appropriations Committee should have done its work—in fact, it did do its work—and then those bills would come to the floor and they would be voted on by the Senate. But that is what our Democratic colleagues have blocked. I think they have gone a bridge too far in blocking the funding for our military, particularly with the headlines we see in the newspapers and the conflicts arising and spreading across the world.

So this is the first time in 6 years that the Appropriations Committee has approved and reported out all 12 appropriations bills. But then these bills became hostage to something our Democratic friends called ''filibuster summer''—a political strategy telegraphed from the pages of the Washington Post just last June to block all appropriations bills.

I said it then and it bears repeating that stifling debate and blocking votes is a pretty lousy political strategy, and it is not what the American people sent us here to do. It is what lost my friends across the aisle control of this Chamber nearly a year ago. It is a losing strategy, it is bad policy, and it is cynical politics. It is simply shameful to take these partisan political fights to the point of denying our troops the resources they need in order to do their job.

So the Appropriations Committee has done its work on a bipartisan basis and painstakingly drafted, considered, and passed all 12 appropriations bills. Now this Chamber should do our job and move those appropriations bills forward, starting with the Defense appropriations bill.

Now that the majority leader has moved to reconsider that failed vote, earlier blocked by our Democratic colleagues, I hope our friends across the aisle have had a chance to reconsider and to think carefully about the ramifications of their decision and that they will join us in moving this bill forward. The world is far too dangerous and the threats are far too real to take this important piece of legislation hostage and prevent the resources going to the troops, who simply deserve it.

Quite simply, we have no time to lose when it comes to fulfilling one of our most basic duties to the American people: defending against threats to national security. I would urge my fellow colleagues to join me in moving this important bill forward.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I respect my colleague from Texas, the majority whip. I disagree with his conclusion. I am vice chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. The chairman is Senator COCHRAN of Mississippi. The two of us and our staffs worked night and day to put together a good Defense appropriations bill. I think we did a good job.

The problem is, there is a difference between the Democrats and the Republicans about the total amount to be spent on the defense budget. The Republicans suggest that we should take $38 billion and put it into the defense budget but not to add a similar amount to the nondefense budget. I could go onto the arcane language of OCO and all of the sequestration. I am going to try to avoid that and keep this at a level where most people understand what we are talking about.

Our concern is not about funding the military on the Democratic side. We wholeheartedly support that, all of us. Not a single Democrat dissents from what I have just said, but the question is whether or not the money that is going to be invested in nondefense agencies is also going to be protected in this appropriations process. That is all we have asked for.

We are willing to put $38 billion more into defense, let's put the same amount in nondefense. What is nondefense? Nondefense, frankly, includes a lot of appropriations programs that are critically important to middle-income families across America. Are we going to continue to fund educational programs so that the kids of working families have a shot at college? That is nondefense spending.

Are we going to make sure that we make the basic processes of government be protected when it comes to investing in nondefense? May I give you an example? Medical research. Is that worth putting money into? From the Republican side, that is nondefense, that is not really that important. I think it is critically important. Once every 67 seconds in America, one of our citizens is diagnosed with Alzheimer's—once every 67 seconds.

It is a tragedy. It is an expensive tragedy. It cost us over $200 billion last year just to care for Alzheimer's patients in America under Medicare and Medicaid. That does not even come close to calculating the sacrifices made by family members on behalf of those who are suffering from Alzheimer's. So should we invest more money in Alzheimer's research? Should we put more money into an effort to delay the onset of Alzheimer's or, God willing, find a cure? Of course we should. That is nondefense spending. That is not a priority of the other side of the aisle.

What we have said to them is: We need to sit down and work this out. Be fair to defense to keep us strong and safe as a nation, but make those critical investments in programs that make a difference to middle-income families across America. What we are asking for today is nothing new. As the Senator from Texas reminded us, we took a vote on this issue. It was over 3 months ago—the same vote. We took the same vote we are about to take at noon today as to whether or not we should have this lopsided appropriation, money to the defense budget but not to the nondefense budget. We said no. Balance it. Be fair. Be as concerned about middle-income families in America as you are about the defense of our Nation. Let the budget reflect that.

But they said no. So we are back again. It was on June 18 when the leadership on the Democratic side of the aisle, aided by others who felt the same way, sent a letter to the Republicans and said: Let's not waste any time shouting at one another and giving speeches on the floor. Let's sit down in closed, bipartisan negotiations and work out the budget, bring the President in. He is critical. We need his participation. But let's work it out.

We wrote that letter on June 18. Here we are more than 3 months later in the

same predicament. We should have taken the time before now—days before the end of the fiscal year, at the end of September—to sit down and work this out by budget negotiation. But they refused. They don't want to sit down.

Instead, they want us to go through these show votes. Last week—last week we had five unnecessary separate votes on the Iran agreement. We had already established, by public announcement of every Senator and by an open public vote, where we stood. Senator MCCONNELL insisted on spending another week and five more votes on exactly the same thing with exactly the same outcome. What a waste of Senate time.

Look at this week. This week is a challenge because of the visit of the Pope and the Jewish holy day, but instead of dealing with substantive issues, this week we have allowed two Republican Presidential candidates who are Senators to have their day on the floor. I think we should be rolling up our sleeves and tackling this issue. I don't want to see a government shutdown. We allowed the Senator from Texas to do that a few years ago, and we paid a heavy price for it. He has now threatened to do it again. He likes shutting down our government, thinks that is a great expression of his effectiveness as a leader. So be it. Maybe it is to some, but not to most.

Instead we should be involved in real budget negotiations. I want to tell you, this idea of a continuing resolution—what is a continuing resolution? It says: Spend the money this year the same way you spent it last year. What if your family had that charge? What if we said: Spend the same amount for groceries and utilities that you did last year, spend it this year. You would say: Wait a minute, that does not reflect the things that have changed in my family. My son is off to college. We are changing the place where we live and such.

That is not the kind of thing that you would respect. That is what a continuing resolution does. It continues to spend money the same way. It wastes taxpayers' money. Senator COCHRAN and I, on a bipartisan basis, came up with a better approach. It is an appropriations bill which we think keeps us safe and spends our defense dollars wisely. So let's not get comfortable with a continuing resolution. It is not good for the Department of Defense, not good for the men and women in uniform who risk their lives for us every single day.

It is important for us to do the responsible thing and move forward. Let's not waste any more time with repeat votes and show-boat votes; let's instead focus our time on negotiating a sound budget.

On June 18, we sent an invitation to the Republicans to sit down and negotiate a budget. The invitation is still open, but we are running out of time. It is important that the President be in that negotiation. It has been 96 days since the last vote we had on this issue. We are going to face it again in just a few moments.

There has not been any progress made on budget negotiations. I ask the Republican leadership of the House and Senate: What are you waiting for? When are you going to sit down and govern? When are you going to sit down and work out problems instead of dreaming up new ways to shut down the Government of the United States of America?

There are signs we are headed back to the same old process that was used before. By the end of the week, they are talking about filibusters on the Republican side, and staying in all night, and maybe we will hear another Dr. Seuss book read to us in the middle of the night by the Texas Senator.

I am not sure what lies ahead, but what the American people are sick and tired of is what they see on the Senate floor today. They want us to do our work. They want us to compromise, to agree, to do what is best for this Nation.

Having one show vote after another does not accomplish that. I ask my colleagues: Work together. I ask the leaders on the Republican side: Instead of one more monotonous, predicable vote after another, should we not sit down and work out a budget negotiation that serves our Nation, not only the defense budget, but all of America, including middle-income families.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I urge the Senate to support the motion to proceed to the Department of Defense appropriations bill for fiscal year 2016. The Committee on Appropriations approved the bill on June 11 by a vote of 27 to 3. The bill provides $489.1 billion in base funding, and $86.8 billion in overseas contingency operations, which is consistent with both the fiscal year 2016 budget resolution and the Defense Subcommittee's allocation.

The bill provides funding to protect the security interests of our country. The Senate should return to regular order starting with this national security legislation. It is a bipartisan bill that provides the President, as Commander in Chief, with the resources to protect our Nation. I urge the Senate to approve proceeding to this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, how much time is remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Four minutes for the minority, 1 minute for the majority.

Mr. DURBIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 2685, an act making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, James Lankford, Roger F. Wicker, John Barrasso, Thom Tillis, Steve Daines, Tom Cotton, Kelly Ayotte, Lindsey Graham, John McCain, John Thune, Jerry Moran, Richard C. Shelby, Daniel Coats, Jeff Flake, Rob Portman.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 2685, an act making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close, upon reconsideration?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 269 Leg.]

YEAS—54

Alexander	Enzi	Moran
Ayotte	Ernst	Paul
Barrasso	Fischer	Perdue
Blunt	Flake	Portman
Boozman	Gardner	Risch
Burr	Graham	Roberts
Capito	Grassley	Rounds
Cassidy	Hatch	Rubio
Coats	Heller	Sasse
Cochran	Hoeven	Scott
Collins	Inhofe	Sessions
Corker	Isakson	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson	Sullivan
Cotton	Kirk	Thune
Crapo	Lankford	Tillis
Cruz	Lee	Toomey
Daines	McCain	Vitter
Donnelly	McConnell	Wicker

NAYS—42

Baldwin	Durbin	Leahy
Bennet	Feinstein	Manchin
Blumenthal	Franken	Markey
Booker	Gillibrand	McCaskill
Brown	Heinrich	Menendez
Cantwell	Heitkamp	Merkley
Cardin	Hirono	Mikulski
Carper	Kaine	Murphy
Casey	King	Nelson
Coons	Klobuchar	Peters

Reed	Schumer	Udall
Reid	Shaheen	Warren
Sanders	Stabenow	Whitehouse
Schatz	Tester	Wyden

NOT VOTING—4

Boxer	Murray
Murkowski	Warner

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 54, the nays are 42.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion, upon reconsideration, is rejected.

The majority leader.

PAIN-CAPABLE UNBORN CHILD PROTECTION ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I withdraw the motion to proceed to H.R. 36.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is withdrawn.

HIRE MORE HEROES ACT OF 2015—Resumed

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the pending business.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 61) amending the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Pending:

McConnell amendment No. 2640, of a perfecting nature.

McConnell amendment No. 2656 (to amendment No. 2640), to prohibit the President from waiving, suspending, reducing, providing relief from, or otherwise limiting the application of sanctions pursuant to an agreement related to the nuclear program of Iran.

McConnell amendment No. 2657 (to amendment No. 2656), to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2658 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 2640), to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2659 (to amendment No. 2658), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell motion to commit the joint resolution to the Committee on Foreign Relations, with instructions, McConnell amendment No. 2660, to prohibit the President from waiving, suspending, reducing, providing relief from, or otherwise limiting the application of sanctions pursuant to an agreement related to the nuclear program of Iran.

McConnell amendment No. 2661 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 2660), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell amendment No. 2662 (to amendment No. 2661), of a perfecting nature.

VOTE ON MOTION TO COMMIT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to table the motion to commit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2658

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to table amendment No. 2658.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2640

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to table amendment No. 2640.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2669

(Purpose: Making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.)

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have a substitute amendment at the desk that I ask the clerk to report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL], for Mr. COCHRAN, proposes an amendment numbered 2669.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2670 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2669

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have an amendment at the desk that I ask the clerk to report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 2670 to amendment No. 2669.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end add the following.

''This Act shall take effect 1 day after the date of enactment.''

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2671 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2670

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 2671 to amendment No. 2670.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike ''1 day'' and insert ''2 days''.

AMENDMENT NO. 2672

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have an amendment to the text proposed to be stricken.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 2672 to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 2669.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end add the following.

''This Act shall take effect 3 days after the date of enactment.''

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2673 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2672

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 2673 to amendment No. 2672.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike ''3'' and insert ''4''

MOTION TO COMMIT WITH AMENDMENT NO. 2674

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have a motion to commit with instructions at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] moves to commit the joint resolution to the Committee on Appropriations with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment numbered 2674.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end add the following.

''This Act shall take effect 5 days after the date of enactment.''

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on my motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2675

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have an amendment to the instructions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 2675 to the instructions (amendment No. 2674) of the motion to commit H.J. Res. 61.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike ''5'' and insert ''6''

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2676 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2675

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 2676 to amendment No. 2675.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike ''6'' and insert ''7''

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk for amendment No. 2669.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on Senate amendment No. 2669 to H.J. Res. 61.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Marco Rubio, Tom Cotton, Orrin G. Hatch, Joni Ernst, Jeff Flake, Lindsey Graham, David Vitter, Chuck Grassley, Thom Tillis, Steve Daines, Bill Cassidy, David Perdue, John Boozman, James Lankford, Thad Cochran.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call for this cloture motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I was struck by some things the Democratic leader said this morning about funding the Government. First he said it was not the Democrats' responsibility to work toward sensible solutions because ''we've helped in any way we can, we've not held up anything procedurally.''

That was just minutes before his party voted again to hold up a bill procedurally that would fund the military at a time with unprecedented international threats. Then he said this: ''We've made it clear that we're not going to proceed to appropriations bills''—talk about a mixed message.

His party has crowed for months about its filibuster summer strategy of blocking every last funding bill in the hopes of taking Americans to the brink. They have now succeeded in taking us there. They think it is the only way to force America to accept their demands for more debt and more bureaucracy. But that is not what Americans want. Americans want Democrats to now work with us responsibly to help our country get out of the situation that they, in fact, have engineered.

The bill before us would do that. It would keep the government funded through the fall while adhering to the bipartisan spending levels already agreed to by both parties. For 1 year, it would defund Planned Parenthood and protect women's health by funding community health clinics with the $235 million instead. This would allow us to press the pause button as we investigate the serious scandals surrounding Planned Parenthood.

I know Democrats have already blocked virtually every bill to fund the government this year, but I am asking them to allow the Senate to fund the government now. I know Democrats have relied on Planned Parenthood as a political ally, but they must be moved by the horrifying images we have seen. Can they not resolve to protect women's health instead of their powerful political friends?

I am not happy that we have been forced into pursuing a CR instead of the normal appropriations process. After all, for the first time in 6 years, a Senate under new leadership actually passed a budget. After all, for the first time in 6 years, a Senate under new leadership passed all 12 necessary bills to fund the government out of committee. It is truly regrettable to see the actions of the party on the other side that led us to this point. The bill before us now represents the best option to keep the government funded, to protect women's health, to press the pause button on funding for a scandal-plagued organization as we investigate further into some truly shocking allegations.

ORDER FOR RECESS

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess until 2:15 p.m. today for the weekly conference meetings.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, will my friend allow me to speak prior to that?

Mr. MCCONNELL. After the remarks of the Democratic leader.

I am sorry, Mr. President. I didn't realize the Democratic leader wished to speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I served in the House of Representatives. It was standard over there for Members at committee hearings and on the floor to always say: I ask unanimous consent to revise and extend my remarks. That was standard practice in the House. We don't do that here. But certainly in the House it would have been totally inappropriate to say: I ask unanimous consent to revise and extend the remarks of my friend from California or wherever they might be from, but that is basically what my friend, the Republican leader, has done.

He has no right to make up what I said this morning. What I said this morning is in the RECORD. The fact is that he can't rewrite what I said. Here is what I said earlier today: We have made it clear that we will not proceed to appropriations bills under the Republicans' partisan budget. That is what I said verbatim this morning.

We seek a budget agreement that fairly prevents mindless sequester cuts to defense and the middle class alike. We want negotiations to start, and I said I am gratified our votes on this measure have caused the Republican leader to acknowledge that we need to negotiate, and that is true. I am happy to see that, and I have publicly commended the Republican leader for the statements he has made in recent days about how we need a clean CR. I also said this morning, as far as the upcoming vote, that there is no reason for Senators to change their votes from how they voted earlier, and that was on the Defense appropriations revote. This is yet another case of the Republican leader just wasting time before we address the real deal.

We read in this morning's papers that the Republican leader plans to bring a clean continuing resolution before the Senate later this week. That is not a day too soon. That is what I said, and that is what I say again.

This vote on Planned Parenthood this Thursday is another rerun vote. I do not in any way take away from people who feel strongly about their position on abortion, Planned Parenthood, and the 20-week abortion. I understand how strongly people feel on both sides of that issue, but this is yet another rerun vote.

The Republicans—in the 9 months they have been running the Senate—have had more revotes than any other majority party in the history of our country. They are No. 1 in revotes. We have revoted and revoted and revoted. We voted on Planned Parenthood earlier this year in August, and we voted on abortion today. How many times will the Republican leader need to return to this same show vote?

We are going to prevent a government shutdown with a clean continuing resolution. That is what he said, and I agree with him.

When will we avoid a default by addressing the debt limit? When will we address cyber security and the highway trust fund? All of these things are important to do, and I am anxious to get them done. We have a lot of problems out there in our great country. We have so many things to do. We haven't addressed the energy problems that face this Nation.

We have fires that are ravaging the great Western part of the United States. The government entities that are fighting these fires don't have the money to fight them. The two worst fires in the history of the State of California are just being tamped down, but they are still not completed. Hundreds of homes have burned. We have a country that is burning up.

The Governor of Nevada is a good man. He is a Republican Governor, and I have great admiration for him. I suggested his name to the President of the United States to become a Federal judge, and he accepted my recommendation. He then resigned that position to run for Governor. He is now conducting a 3-day event in Nevada—bringing people in from all over the West and all over the country—to talk about what is happening to Nevada. We are having so many problems in Nevada. Lake Mead is drying up, and Lake Tahoe is having tremendous problems. We have a snowpack that basically doesn't exist. We don't have many rivers in Nevada, but those little rivers that we have, including the mighty Colorado, are in deep trouble. We have snowpack in upper Colorado that evaporates before it gets into the river.

I am willing to do whatever is necessary to move forward in funding this government, but to blame us for not funding the government is really carrying things to extremes.

I have completed my statement, Mr. President.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold his suggestion of the absence of a quorum?

Mr. COCHRAN. I withhold my suggestion.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:49 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

HIRE MORE HEROES ACT OF 2015—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for the following Senators to speak about the importance of the reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank. I ask that Senator COONS be recognized for 5 minutes but first that Senator KING be recognized for 5 minutes and that I be recognized for 10 minutes, reserving the remaining time for others who may join us.

I wish to initially yield time to Senator KING.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Maine.

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. KING. Mr. President, as the Senator from North Dakota just mentioned, we are here on the floor to talk about the importance of the reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank. There are a lot of issues here that are contentious and controversial, and there are arguments to be made on both sides, but this one, frankly, puzzles me. I do not understand why the Congress has not moved with alacrity to reauthorize an agency of the Federal Government that fills a gap in the private market which is not filled by private enterprise, which has been in business for over 80 years, and which helps and assists businesses large and small across America and returns money to the Treasury. This is not a cost to the Treasury. This is not some kind of budget bill that increases our deficit. This actually will increase revenue because this agency makes a net return for the taxpayers.

When General Electric last week announced the possible layoff of 500 people across the country and the moving of jobs overseas—because virtually every other industrialized country in the world has an export-import bank, an export promotion authority that is comparable to what we have, General Electric says: We are going to have to go where they provide that kind of support.

One staff member of the committee in the other body, which has voted to not reauthorize this, said: Well, for General Electric, this is a drop in the bucket.

Well, of those 400 or 500 jobs General Electric is talking about, 80 of them are at a General Electric plant in Bangor, ME, and 80 good jobs in Bangor, ME, is not a drop in the bucket.

I would invite that staff member to come to Bangor, ME, and talk to the families of those people who are going to lose their jobs because of this ridiculous policy of not reauthorizing a governmental agency that is serving the public needs of this country, particularly in an age of expanding global trade. We are competing with the rest of the world, and we are shooting ourselves in the foot in the process. It simply makes no sense.

I have visited with small businesses in Maine—as few as 35 jobs which depend upon the actions of the Export-Import Bank in order to be able to finance their receivables from foreign countries and then they can compete in the international marketplace.

There is simply no reason to not move with some speed to reauthorize this agency. We are penalizing American businesses in global competition for no good reason that I can discern. If there are issues at the Bank with its management or whatever, let's fix those. Let's have hearings. Let's find what the problems are and fix them but not eliminate an agency that is doing good and returning money to the taxpayers, particularly at this moment in American and world history where international trade and world exports are so important.

I hope my colleagues in both Houses, on both sides of the aisle will join with us to make a simple reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank so it can continue to do the good work it has done on behalf of businesses in Maine and North Dakota and Texas and California and New York and all over this country.

This is just common sense. There are things around here that I understand we have controversies about and we can argue about, but I have not heard any argument that holds any water as to why this agency should not be continued and allowed to provide the benefits it has and does and will do for the businesses and, more importantly, the employees of those businesses all across the country.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I wish to address the issue of the Export-Import Bank reauthorization, if I might, for a few moments. My colleague, the Senator from the State of Maine, has just spoken to it, and I expect my colleague from the State of North Dakota will also follow along the same lines. I wish to join with my colleagues here today in standing up for American manufacturing and in standing up for American businesses that rely on the Export-Import Bank for the critical financing they need to export their products to the markets of the world. Many of us have said the same thing on this floor over the weeks or months since its authorization expired.

It is striking to me that because of the views of a few Members of the House and Senate, this valuable tool which has helped American companies sell their goods around the world for more than 80 years has been allowed to expire. As we just heard from the Senator from Maine, the Export-Import Bank actually operates at no cost to the taxpayer, and it is something that has helped American businesses sell almost $30 billion in goods and supported more than 150,000 American jobs last year alone. So I really think the opposition to the reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank is badly misguided. It is my hope that we will find some bipartisan path toward the restoration of this critical tool.

In my first 4 years in the Senate, I was the chair of the Africa subcommittee on the Foreign Relations Committee, and I took advantage of that opportunity to learn a great deal more about this vast continent with 54 countries and the opportunities it provides for American companies to sell their exported products to their growing markets.

Most folks think of the Export-Import Bank as principally providing financing for a few very large companies—companies such as General Electric and Boeing—and it does provide essential financing for their export sales,

but those big companies also have enormous supplier chains that employ folks all over the country. I could focus today on the important sales that Boeing and GE have made to Africa and its growing market, but I wish to focus on a very small company with an important story that I think helps illuminate why Ex-Im financing matters.

This little company is called Acrow Bridge. Although it is headquartered in New Jersey, it has a manufacturing plant right near Lewisburg, PA. That plant rolls out steel bridges. It is in Milton, PA. It has been making bridges from the same model Patton's troops used as they rolled across France and Germany during the Second World War, modular bridges that are easy to install in remote places without a whole lot of infrastructure support.

Why does that matter? Because they recently successfully competed for big contracts to sell hundreds of bridges to areas in Africa, including countries like Cameroon or Zambia that badly need infrastructure.

Who are their competitors? Comparable companies from China and from Europe that are also seeking to sell into these growing markets.

Why do I care? I am from Delaware. I care about manufacturing all over this country, but this Acrow Bridge company ships their bridges from Pennsylvania to Delaware, where, in New Castle, the Voigt & Schweitzer hot dip galvanizing company takes each bridge and dips it in zinc and galvanizes it before it is put on a ship and sent off to places all over the world. Voigt & Schweitzer doesn't employ thousands of people, but it employs dozens of people. Acrow Bridge in Milton, PA, doesn't employ thousands of people, but it employs dozens of people. Manufacturing across our country critically depends on access to export markets.

I recently had a chance to meet up with the Acrow Bridge export sales specialist at a conference in Gabon in Africa. He was alarmed that in the absence of Ex-Im financing, his key competitors are much more likely to succeed in the next contract and the next contract and the next contract.

We folks are just unilaterally disarming here in the fight to access the growing markets of the world, and I can't for the life of me fathom why we have done this. As my colleague from Maine said, if there are issues with the Ex-Im Bank, put them on the floor, put them on the table, and let's address them.

In my experience, when the Bank makes a loan to American businesses, it is not replacing private capital that would otherwise have been making that loan. Most often, it supplements private capital or makes a private bank more inclined to put up its own. And more often than not, Ex-Im serves as the lender of last resort, especially when you are financing sales into risky, growing markets in countries like Cameroon, Zambia, or elsewhere in Africa.

I don't think the Export-Import Bank is doing something best left to the private sector; I think it picks up where the private sector leaves off and it provides key financing to level the global playing field and make it possible for our manufacturers, for our small businesses to compete around the world.

Frankly, most of our competitors have much more robust financing available for their export sales than the Export-Import Bank provides. I just can't fathom why we would allow American businesses to be put at such a key competitive disadvantage. It is my real hope that before it is too late, we will take up and reauthorize the Export-Import Bank.

There were disappointing and concerning announcements just in recent weeks by General Electric and by Boeing that they are already moving employment overseas or they are seriously considering it. GE just announced they are moving a turboprop engine development center to Europe because they can't remain competitive in the absence of Ex-Im financing. That is going to cause the loss of 500 jobs in a community here in America. And Boeing has made even more concerning announcements.

I think it is critical that we in Congress come together and show that we care about American jobs and that we care about fighting for American manufacturers because we recognize that 95 percent of the opportunity in the world is in the growing sectors that are represented by the export markets of the world.

It is my hope that we can find a way through this, that the unwillingness to reopen the Bank, which is sending the wrong message to the world markets, is something we can come together and address. At a time when our economy is gaining steam and Americans are going back to work, we need to continue to help American companies to compete around the world, not make it harder. So I think we should stop playing politics with American jobs, stop pursuing an ideological agenda, and reauthorize the Export-Import Bank immediately.

Thank you.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, we have just heard what I think is almost a horror story from two great Senators, one representing 80 jobs, one representing maybe just dozens of jobs, but every one of those jobs matters in America. We come here every week and we say we are here fighting for the middle class. We are here fighting to build the American economy. We are here fighting to make sure our manufacturing and our businesses are competitive in a highly charged and highly competitive world. And we have an institution that is critical to making sure we have access to these export markets, doesn't cost the Treasury a dime, is used by large corporations and small corporations alike, and it is supported by Democrats and Republicans. But why do we shut down the Ex-Im Bank?

I serve on the banking committee, and we had a hearing. The bill we have been considering these many months is the Kirk-Heitkamp bill. I have taken responsibility for addressing some of the concerns about the Ex-Im Bank and looking at how we can reform some of the things that are legitimate concerns about how the Bank operates. But I will tell my colleagues from that hearing that what we saw is the National Association of Manufacturers, we saw the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. And we might imagine that those two witnesses were the Republican witnesses. They were not the Republican witnesses; they were the Democratic witnesses. The Republican witnesses came from intellectual think tanks. They came from institutions of higher learning with conservative think tanks. They all had a theory about the Ex-Im Bank. I asked them a simple question when it came time for me to ask them a question. I asked every one of those persons who represented a think tank or represented an academic institution how many jobs they have created, what their output is, what their contribution to the gross domestic product was. They didn't have much of an answer. I said: Why should I believe what you are telling me in terms of this being the slippery slope toward the demise of democracy as we know it, which is really how the Ex-Im Bank has been categorized against the word of the National Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers.

This has become an irrational ideological fight. And, unfortunately, we have irrational ideological fights almost daily in the Congress, to no good end for the American people. But this Senator will say this: This fight has devastating consequences. We now have shut down the Bank. No new credit is coming in for 2½ months—2½ months where a small manufacturer in Delaware may say: Well, how have we done this in the past? How have we taken on currency risk? How have we taken on debt risk? How have we guaranteed this in the past? Call your local bank. Do you know what the banker is going to tell you? Call the Ex-Im Bank because in spite of what they tell you, somehow magically in this market will emerge a private institution that will carry on the responsibility of the Ex-Im Bank.

That is not reality. The largest supporters of the Ex-Im Bank are those financial institutions that want to continue to provide credit and help grow those American businesses that are putting Americans back to work.

One of the things I did want to talk about today is that way too often we hear about the so-called bank of Boeing, the bank of GE, and how it is that this institution helps only those large

manufacturers. What I would tell you, first, is if you look at the business model of GE or the business model of Boeing, what they do is assemble. They assemble products that are manufactured all across the country, and the components are manufactured in large shops and small shops all the way down the supply chain to small communities that are doing things in Jamestown, ND, that are growing jobs. In the communities that you just heard about in Bangor, ME, and communities in Delaware, they are building out those jobs. Those are the people we are hearing from. Those are the people who are shaking their heads, saying: Why is it that you guys talk all the time about helping American business, growing the economy, growing exports? You talk all the time about jobs and the need to bring back the innovation, and you curtail and limit my ability to grow and, quite frankly, my ability to survive. How does that happen?

I want to talk about the equipment wholesalers that will see a negative impact. Look at this—35 to 40 percent, if Ex-Im isn't reauthorized.

Equipment wholesalers stated that without the Export-Import Bank, it will be at a disadvantage in increasingly globalized markets. No access—do you know why? Because there are 80 other countries that have export credit agencies.

The first thing China and India did when Asia slowed down, when they knew their economies were beginning to suffer some of the consequences of slow growth—guess what they did. The first thing they did is pump more money into their export credit agencies—in fact, billions more into those export credit agencies. Then, when this institution shut down the Ex-Im Bank, they shouted: Hip, hip, hooray. They knew that not only did they have money to capitalize and to guarantee these sales, but they were operating in a market where we have unilaterally, economically disarmed in the export market.

When we go back and take a look at how the U.S. Export-Import Bank has supported more than 850,000 jobs, when we look at Wahpeton, ND—Wahpeton, ND, is the largest town next to my hometown. Not a lot of people live there, but for the people who work there, those jobs matter. Look at that—almost $1 million—and those jobs are being threatened today because of the inactivity of this institution.

Sixty percent of WCCO Belting's annual sales and revenues come from customers who are located outside the United States of America. This is a small town in Wahpeton, ND. Many of the pages here probably didn't even know such a place existed, but the people who work there are doing a great job, and they are contributing to the global economy. More importantly, they are building up their local economy, and they are building up the U.S. manufacturing and trade deficit. This is something I know the Presiding Officer, as a former member of the OMB and somebody who has watched the American economy, is very concerned about, making sure that the trade deficit is favorable to us, that we are actually exporting more than we are importing. That is how we grow our economy. That is called new wealth creation.

When we look at not just manufacturing, but we look at J.M. Grain, a business that I visited—built out of nothing by a mom and pop who put their heads together and said: This is something I think we can do. They built this great business. The Export-Import Bank provides credit and credit insurance needed for J.M. Grain to export its products. If Ex-Im isn't reauthorized, J.M. Grain may be forced to sell its products to larger corporations that can finance the exports—consolidation—because we can't take care of small business.

Even though we hear the platitudes and all of the statements quite to the contrary on the floor of the Senate and the Congress, that we care about small business, we do nothing in terms of our actions to really prove that.

Amity Technology is a great story. This is a family—the developers of this company come from the family who developed the Bobcat skid-steer loaders, if you can imagine that. That company was sold and has moved on, yet those young entrepreneurs—those young inventors—have taken the next step. This is a company that is absolutely dependent on the Export-Import Bank. If you look at this, it has supported more than $50 million in exports in the last decade. Without the help of the Export-Import Bank, Amity would lose at least 10 percent of its business.

Story after story in America—this is just North Dakota. We can tell you more stories about what is happening in North Dakota, but stories after stories in the State of North Dakota and across the country include small businessmen and small businesswomen who are shaking their heads, saying: What did we do? Why is it that something such as the Export-Import Bank, which is so critical to our being successful and doesn't cost the American taxpayers a dime. Why is it that this is so hard?

I have to try and explain how it is that we got 64 votes for the Export-Import Bank here on the floor of the Senate—a huge majority. We think we actually have the support of about 67 Members of the Senate—a veto-proof majority, if you look at it that way.

And we know that over in the House of Representatives there is well over 50 percent of the Members of that body that would vote for the Ex-Im Bank. Where is the hangup? Where is the problem?

Quite honestly, the problem is with leadership because if this isn't a priority or if the Ex-Im Bank may be a problem for a Speaker who has a small but vocal group of conservatives who hate the Ex-Im Bank and who have made this their celebrity cause, then we will just send it over here and we will try to sneak it in. That is kind of the idea, right? We need a vehicle.

I hear that so often for good ideas and for things we know we have majority votes for and well over majority votes for: We need a vehicle. I joke to my staff that I am going to introduce a bill, and it is going to be called ''the vehicle.'' Then we will be able to do everything we have to do to keep the American economy moving forward—the things that we can all agree on—because then, maybe, the American public will see something that is not rancor and disagreement. They will see us listening to American business, to American manufacturers, to American workers, and they will hear that we actually will respond, and we will move this bill forward.

Now there is a lot of talk that we may not get this done in September. No, it doesn't look very good. And if you had told me when we shut down the Bank in June, if you had told me that we were going to open it up in July, I would have said: That is not likely. We will get the Bank reopened in July.

July came and went, and the promise of the vehicle, which was supposed to be the Transportation bill, never materialized. And the promise of putting it somewhere where we could actually get it done never materialized. So we went home in August, and I said: Well, we will get it done in September. We will figure out a way to reauthorize the Ex-Im Bank in September because we can't shut it down for that long.

September has come and gone. We have got other priorities—no opportunity for floor time. Now we are looking at October, and the promise once again in October is that we are going to put it on the Transportation bill. Well, this Senator has heard that promise twice. So I think it is now time to ask for consideration of this bill.

People say: We all need to reserve the special floor time of the Senate for really important ideas. I say that these people, the 80 people, 90 people in Bangor, ME, think this is an important idea. All the people now who supply GE who are looking at GE's plan to move a lot of this manufacturing and assembly overseas, they think this is very important. They think American jobs, American manufacturing, our trade deficit, and our access to global markets, are very important for the Congress to consider.

So we have a bill that has broad bipartisan support: the Kirk-Heitkamp Export-Import Reauthorization bill. We can put that bill on the floor. We can move it in an expedited fashion because we have a procedure to do this. When there is a will, there is a way. We can move pretty quickly to votes here if we want to, and we can pass this bill. Then we can send it over to the House of Representatives. They can put it on the floor, and they can pass this bill. It

can get sent to the President's desk and get signed, and we can reopen the Export-Import Bank. We can hang out a big sign: ''Open for business once again.''

But the longer we wait, the longer we continue to allow this to become the celebrity cause of a very, very small minority of hard-core conservatives in this country, the harder it is going to be to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank. Make no mistake. At the end of the day, it is not about inside-the-beltway politics. It is not about whether we are going to have political winners or losers. What this is about is people's livelihoods. It is about helping American workers do what we know we do best: innovate, create, manufacture, and export.

I thank the Presiding Officer so much for the time. We will continue to be talking about the Ex-Im Bank. As you know, I almost can't even approach a group because they think I am going to regale them with 20 hours of the Ex-Im Bank and the challenges we have with reauthorization.

But I will tell you this: The Ex-Im Bank is not only about manufacturing; it is almost a metaphor for what is wrong in the Congress. What that is, is an institution that creates jobs, has broad bipartisan support, and has the ability to provide opportunity for American workers, and we shut it down because the Congress cannot figure out how to avoid a minority of people dictating the agenda.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

TRIBUTE TO ASHLEY ALDRIDGE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to share a story with Members of the Senate and those following us this evening. It is an amazing story of the selfless courage of a young Illinois mother who many are calling—with good reason—a guardian angel.

Ashley Aldridge of Auburn, IL, was home making lunch for two little babies last Tuesday. She heard someone outside crying for help. She looked out her kitchen window and saw an elderly man in a wheelchair on the railroad tracks near her mobile home. He was calling for help.

Without a moment's hesitation Ashley asked a neighbor to stay with her kids and she ran toward the man in distress. She saw the railroad guard arms coming down and heard the oncoming train. When she reached the man in the wheelchair, Earl Moorman, Ashley discovered that the wheel of his chair was lodged in the tracks. There was no moving it. So Ashley tried to pick up Mr. Moorman. Now, Mr. Moorman is 75 years old and he weighs about 200 pounds. Ashley could not move him. She tried again. With an Amtrak train barreling down the tracks at 81 miles an hour, Ashley Aldridge somehow, some way found the strength to lift Earl Moorman up and out of his trapped wheelchair. Not 5 seconds after she dragged him off the railroad track, the train hit the wheelchair and smashed it into bits.

When the last car on the Amtrak train passed, Ashley looked up and saw a police car on the other side of the tracks. Someone had heard Mr. Moorman and called 911. The police were there quickly, but they could not get there fast enough to save Mr. Moorman. Ashley Aldridge, a 19-year-old wife and stay-at-home mom with two little kids got there in time. No wonder Earl Moorman is calling Ashley his guardian angel.

Ashley Aldridge and Earl Moorman live in Auburn, IL. It is a little town about 20 miles south of my hometown of Springfield. Auburn's mayor and town council and all the folks around town are hailing Ashley Aldridge as a hero. She is that and more. In a world in which we often hear the message that we should only be concerned about ourselves and our own families, Ashley is an inspiration. Without a moment's hesitation this brave, young mom risked her own life to save the life of a man she had never met. It is an amazing story of selfless courage. In this world filled with so many innocent people in danger, I hope we will all remember and be inspired by the courage of this remarkable young woman.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, this is a historic week in Washington, DC. Later today Pope Francis will arrive in Washington for a 2-day visit. During his time here, the Holy Father will meet with President Obama, celebrate mass, canonize a new saint, and address a joint meeting of Congress. This will be the first time a Pope has ever addressed Congress.

In light of Pope Francis's historic visit, I believe today is an appropriate time to reflect on the importance of religious liberty in American life. This will be the first of a series of addresses I will be delivering on this vital subject. Religious liberty is an issue of deep significance to me. I come from a family of faith. I represent a State that was founded by religious pioneers fleeing persecution.

In my many travels, I have seen people express religious devotion in a multitude of ways, affirming their belief in the Divine through song, word, and deed. I have also seen misguided government officials limit religious expression, often in the name of security or some other nebulous goal. I have seen people of courage stand up to these officials, refusing to accept claims that the commands of the State trump rights of religious belief, nor am I alone in viewing religious liberty as a vitally important subject. Indeed, throughout our history, protecting religious liberty has been a priority of lawmakers and laymen alike.

As far back as 1657, residents of the community known today as Flushing, NY, petitioned colonial leaders to end restrictions on religious practice that prevented some community members from practicing their faith. Their petition, known as the Flushing Remonstrance, declared that community members should be allowed to decide for themselves how to worship.

In 1776, 120 years later, Virginia adopted a declaration of rights that proclaimed in no uncertain terms that ''all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion according to the dictates of conscience.''

This was followed a decade later by the famous words of the First Amendment, which forbids Congress from making any law that prohibits the free exercise of religion. More recently, our leaders have continued to affirm the importance of religious liberty in both word and deed. In 1984, the United States joined 47 other nations in approving the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which of course proclaims that every person has a right to ''manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship or observance.''

Four decades later, in 1800, Congress passed a law declaring that government may not ''substantially burden a person's exercise of religion,'' unless doing so is necessary to further a compelling government interest. Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barrack Obama have all issued proclamations affirming the continued importance of religious liberty in American life. President Obama's most recent proclamation, issued on January 15 of this year, called religious freedom a ''fundamental libert[y].''

He declared that every person should be ''free to choose and live their faith.'' There can be no question that religious liberty has been a central concern throughout our Nation's history. Over the coming weeks, I will discuss a number of topics related to religious liberty. These topics will include, among other things, the legal and political history of religious liberty in our country, the ways in which religious liberty is under attack both at home and abroad, and what we in Congress should do to protect religious freedom against such encroachments. I will also address the history and importance of religion in the public square and the ways in which religion is beneficial to society.

Today, however, I begin with first principles: why religious freedom matters, why it is important, why it is worth protecting. It is common, when speaking of religious liberty, to begin by noting that religious exercise is the first individual right listed in the Constitution. This priority of place denotes that religious exercise has special significance.

Of all the potential rights out there, both God-given and manmade, the Founders chose to list religious freedom first. Part of this, no doubt, had to do with history. The United States exists because of religious freedom. The

Pilgrims set sail because they wanted to go to a place where they could practice their beliefs free from state interference. The Founders of Maryland similarly sought a new land where an oppressed religious minority, Catholics, could live out their faith openly and honestly.

Pennsylvania was a haven for Quakers and other religious groups. Although the motivations of colonists were multifaceted, the desire for religious freedom was a driving force behind many settlers' decisions to come to America. They came to escape persecution, to practice their religion as they wished without the need for official state sanction or the threat of state-sponsored suppression.

But history is not the end of the story. There is something inherent in the nature of religious exercise that merits special protection. To explain, I first need to talk a bit about the character of government. I will then connect my discussion back to religious liberty. Government is, at bottom, a war of wills. It is how we answer the fundamental question of all human relations: Who decides?

Government is the instrument by which we place certain conduct off-limits or make other conduct compulsory and then back up those rules with threat of force. We may extol democracy as the best and highest form of government, while at the same time disparaging autocracy or other dictatorial regimes, but the difference between these governments is a difference of form, not function.

All governments limit individual freedom. The question is, Who decides what those limits are and how far they extend? When government limits freedom, it makes a value judgment that the conduct proscribed is less important, less worthy, than whatever goal the government is seeking to accomplish. Take the fight against drugs. Long ago, Congress made a decision that avoiding the devastating consequences of drug addiction and drug violence is a more worthy goal than permitting people to choose for themselves whether to ingest certain mind-altering substances. We made a value judgment that reducing violence and preventing addiction is more important than giving people unfettered control over what they consume.

It is easy to see why. Violence and addiction are tangible, devastating harms that ruin lives and destroy aspirations. The ability to consume mind-altering substances, by contrast, is a narrow concern that does not go to any core concept of personhood. In other areas, the calculus may be more complicated. Whether we are debating the proper approach to energy production, health insurance, infrastructure investment, education standards or tax reform, we weigh competing values. The policy we ultimately select depends on which values to which we give greater weight.

Now to religious liberty. I said earlier that religious liberty merits special protection. Indeed, it deserves preeminent protection against all other rights. The reason is that rights of conscience and of religious exercise go to the very heart of who we are as human beings and how we make sense of our world. There can be no higher value than enabling people to find purpose in their lives, to make sense of the sorrows and disappointments, as well as the joys that attend life here on the Earth.

Indeed, the choices we make about what we believe and about whom we stand among are the most important choices we make in life. When a person feels called by a higher power to perform some act or to refrain from some activity, that person is defining himself by reference to his beliefs. Those beliefs may seem irrational to some or silly to others, but to the person who holds those beliefs they make all the difference in the world.

When government interferes with religious exercise, it seeks to insert itself into the place of God. It tells a believer that his views about what really matters may be an interesting curiosity, a nice psychosocial experiment, perhaps, but that at the end of the day they are illegitimate. The state's interests must prevail because the state is the source of justice and truth.

What is going on is a value judgment. Just as with all other government decrees, when a state commands a person to violate his religious beliefs, it makes a value judgment that the state's objectives override all contrary concerns. It just so happens that in this case, those contrary concerns are an individual's most personal, deeply held beliefs.

This is a problem for three reasons: First, we have or are supposed to have a limited government. Our government is supposed to serve us. It is supposed to help us flourish, not vice versa. But the government that overrides religious belief is not a limited government; it is a tyranny. It presumes power to decide for its citizens the most fundamental and defining choices of life: who we are, why we are here, what our purpose is, and how we find happiness.

No decision is more fundamental to human existence than the decision we make regarding our relationship to the Divine. No act of government can be more intrusive or more invasive of individual autonomy and free will than the act of compelling a person to violate his or her sincerely chosen religious beliefs. We should have more humility than to think we can define better than our fellow citizens the purpose of life and the ends thereof. Certainly a limited government such as ours ought not tell its people that it knows best on matters far beyond its ambit.

Second, valuing transient policy objectives over deeply held religious beliefs places citizens on the horns of an impossible dilemma: either obey God whose commands are eternal and unalterable or obey the state, which controls life, liberty, and property here on Earth. There are some who seek to equate religious liberties with other forms of liberty or to downgrade it to a form of ''belief liberty.''

Under this view, as explained by LDS Apostle Dallin H. Oaks, there is nothing particularly special about religious liberty. It is merely the ability to believe as one chooses about spiritual matters, just as one might choose a political party, a favorite philosopher or a favorite actor, but there is no equivalency. Religious liberty alone goes to one's conception of self of one's place in the universe. It alone goes to those most fundamental questions that help us find purpose in our lives. What is more, it implicates duties that transcend mere personal choice and become obligatory in the life of the believer.

Professor Robbie George, the chairman of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, explains powerfully the flaw in the claim that religious liberty is just another type of so-called belief liberty:

> The right to follow one's conscience, and the obligation to respect conscience—especially in matters of faith—obtain not because people as autonomous agents should be able to do as they please; they obtain, and are stringent and sometimes overriding, because people have duties and the obligation to fulfill them. . . . The right of conscience is a right to do what one judge's oneself to be under an obligation to do, whether one welcomes the obligation or must overcome strong aversion in order to fulfill it.

When government denies religious freedom, it forces believers to choose between duty to God and duty to man—duty to man backed by a threat of force. No government that values its citizens' agency and certainly no limited government that exists at the suffrage of the people should put its citizens to such an impossible choice.

The third reason why valuing State objectives over religious beliefs is a problem is that it sets up the State as moral arbiter. I will speak only briefly to this point.

When the State declares certain beliefs out of bounds or unworthy of protection, it tells the world that the opinions of government officials trump rights of conscience. It tells believers that government knows best and that their benighted views—the believers' views, that is—have been weighed and found wanting. The current wisdom, which may be contrary to the wisdom of all human history, must triumph for no reason other than it is current and currently favored by government elites. All must fall before the State, which is supreme both in matters of might and morality.

This aggressive view of the State's moral authority has no place in a system of limited government and is completely contrary to our constitution. Humility should be our watchword. We should remember that we may be wrong.

Now, this doesn't mean religious freedom should be unlimited, that

there should be no boundaries on religious exercise. When a religious practice causes injury or threatens to upend important State goals, government does have a proper role to play in balancing interests. But the standard that must be met before the State intervenes should be very high.

Again, we are not talking here about mere personal preferences, about things people would rather do or not do, all else being equal; we are talking about acts that, as Professor George puts it, individuals feel they have an obligation to do, an obligation that comes not from family or friends or from society but from God himself.

Before we ask individuals to contravene commands they believe come from a higher power, we had better be sure that what we are asking is absolutely necessary. We had better be sure that what we are asking furthers a compelling government interest and is the only way to accomplish that interest. Only this standard, which requires government to exhaust all other options before invading the religious liberty over its citizens, adequately accounts for the centrality of faith in the lives of believers and the proper relationship between individual and State.

Mr. President, my argument today has been based on first principles, on the inviolate right of each and every person to look out for himself or herself, the purpose of life, and his or her place in the universe. It has also been based on the principle, enshrined in our Constitution, that ours is a limited government that exists to serve, not dominate, its people.

I have purposely stayed away from arguing that religion is a good thing, a net benefit to society, because I believe religious freedom deserves special protection separate and apart from whether religion makes men and women better citizens. Religious liberty should be a protected value because the State has no authority to tell individuals how they should approach the Divine or prescribe for them the meaning of their lives. It is a matter of autonomy, a question of who serves whom. But I would be remiss if I did not briefly outline the many ways religion and religious exercise have benefited our Nation.

Today, many people sadly view religion as a sort of fetter, a chain that holds us back as a society from achieving our true potential. They see religion as the antagonist of social justice, as a refuge for reactionaries who do not understand or who fear our modern world. This view is not only shortsighted, it is ignorant.

The two greatest social movements in our Nation's history—the abolition movement and the civil rights movement—were inspired by religious conviction and led by religious leaders. We speak today of Dr. Martin Luther King, but we forget that before he was a doctor, he was a reverend. In 1967, the year before his death, Reverend King proclaimed:

> Before I was a civil rights leader, I was a preacher of the Gospel. This was my first calling and it still remains my greatest commitment. . . . [A]ll that I do in civil rights I do because I consider it a part of my ministry.

Religion instills in our youth principles of morality and right behavior. I do not claim that religion is necessary for a person to be a good citizen, but I do affirm that religion, rightly practiced, instills virtues—concern for others, a desire for good, objectives beyond the mere pursuit of something pleasures—that lead to engaged citizens and a healthy society. Happily, religious freedom is not just a good in and of itself but is a good for society as well.

I will have much more to say on this topic in a future set of remarks. For present purposes, I will conclude with this point: Religious liberty is a fundamental feature of our Republic. It is why we exist as a nation. It helps to explain why we have endured so long despite our many differences. It has been a bedrock of our laws for centuries and was largely uncontested until only a few years ago. It deserves continuing protection as a preeminent value because it safeguards our ability as citizens to find purpose in our lives and to divine for ourselves who we are. It matters more than any other freedom. That is why it was listed first in the Constitution.

Too many of our fellow citizens—perhaps even too many in this body—have lost sight of the purpose and importance of religious liberty and of our duty as legislators to protect the freedom of all citizens to believe and to act according to their beliefs.

I will return to this theme in the coming weeks as I deliver additional remarks on this most crucial topic. All I can say is that religious freedom means everything to me. I think it means everything to people of good will who really have studied how this Nation came about, how it progressed, how it has overcome some of the most monumental problems in the history of the world, and how we have been so successful after all these years.

We have a tendency in this current climate, in this current world to start to decry religious belief. I want to make sure that we don't end it, that we augment it, and that we get back to where we should be as a Nation so that we can continue to maintain this great Nation as the greatest Nation with the greatest freedom and the greatest Constitution in the world.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following my remarks, the Senator from Alaska be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PAIN-CAPABLE UNBORN CHILD PROTECTION

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, today I was proud and honored to vote for cloture on the motion to proceed to the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, offered by my dear friend and leader, Senator GRAHAM of South Carolina.

Nearly 17 years ago to this day, I came to the Senate floor to cast a vote to override then-President Clinton's veto of the Federal partial-birth abortion ban and to speak out for the voiceless unborn children who were victims of that deplorable practice. As supporters of that effort to end partial-birth abortions in the United States will recall, it was a long journey to see legislation finally signed into law in 2003 but a journey fully consistent with America's long commitment to the rights and dignity of all human life. Enacting that legislation called upon our Nation's moral conscience in the same way our country is compelled to action in the face of injustice at home and abroad, and I believe we as a nation are better off for it today.

The Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act the Senate considered today is no different. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation to protect the lives of unborn children by banning abortions beyond the time when a child in the womb can feel pain. My support for this bill is a continuation of my longstanding and unequivocal pro-life record since I was first elected to the Senate.

As was the case when the Senate considered the ban on partial-birth abortion, we have to recognize that the bill the Senate voted on today does not fit neatly into the traditional debate about whether you are pro-life or pro-choice. The bill is about banning the extreme practice of late-term abortions and protecting the lives of fully formed human beings who can feel real pain. These abortions occur at the beginning of the sixth month of pregnancy. They end the life of a human being who has been found worthy of fetal anesthesia to dull the pain the procedure causes but somehow unworthy of life. I submit that to oppose this bill, to vote to allow this practice to continue to be legal in this country, is extreme and unconscionable.

This effort puts us on the right side of the American people and the right side of history. This legislation has 45 cosponsors in the Senate, and it passed the House by a vote of 242 to 184 in May of this year. A recent poll found that 64 percent of Americans support restricting late-term abortions.

I am proudly pro-life because I believe this is a human rights issue inextricably tied to the values of our Nation. These are the same values that have resulted in a long-held American commitment to fighting for human rights and for the disadvantaged and the voiceless around the world. The same commitment to fighting for human life must be true in our Nation today for unborn children.

In April 2014, Time magazine ran a story called ''A Preemie Revolution: Cutting-edge medicine and dedicated caregivers are helping the tiniest babies survive—and thrive.'' The article

discussed remarkable medical advancements that have resulted in a steadily decreasing age of viability for infants born prematurely. It details the complexities of caring for premature babies, the challenge of seeing to things as basic as breathing for these babies, as well as the ''round-the-clock SWAT team of nearly 300 [medical professionals]'' that come together at neonatal intensive care units, NICU, to fight for these tiny lives.

In the author's words:

> [I]n some ways, the work of a NICU will always seem like an exercise in disproportion—an army of people and a mountain of infrastructure caring for a pound of life. But it's a disproportion that speaks very well of us.

The painstaking fight for human life that goes on in NICUs around the country is irreconcilable with the current status quo in our Federal law that permits late-term abortions.

As we know, what is at stake in this debate is made all the more real and urgent by the heinous video footage showing Planned Parenthood's role in the harvesting of unborn babies' body parts. I was proud to vote in support of defunding Planned Parenthood while preserving Federal funding for women's health services in facilities such as community health centers.

I urge my colleagues to consider the significance of this vote today, the reality of the practice that this bill is aimed at prohibiting, and what permitting late-term abortions says about our Nation's commitment to fighting for life and standing up for human rights when our conscience calls us to. I deeply regret that this body failed today to vote for the voiceless and ban late-term abortions and protect life. I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to reconsider their position on this important issue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, listening to the last two speakers, I am reminded what a privilege and honor it is to be able to serve in the Senate alongside great Americans—the President pro tempore, the Senator from Utah, and the Senator from Arizona, JOHN MCCAIN, who have served this country for decades—decades—with honor and distinction, and, as we saw in their remarks just a few minutes ago, with wisdom from experience and conviction.

We took two important votes today. One, as Senator MCCAIN was talking about, was the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, very important pro-life legislation. I agree with what the Senator from Arizona said about that very important bill and commend the Presiding Officer for his leadership throughout the country.

We also voted on the Defense appropriations bill today, another important bill. I am not sure it is going to get a lot of press, but I wish to talk about what is going on there because it is actually very important for the American people to really have a sense of what is happening. We saw in the media, we see all over Washington and on TV this talk concerning a government shutdown. I think a lot of people have concerns about it. Let me talk about that in the context of the bill we voted on today, which, unfortunately, was filibustered by our colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

A lot of us who are new here in the Senate—the Presiding Officer, my colleague from North Carolina—ran on the issue of a dysfunctional Senate, where the most basic function of government was not happening. Let me give one critical example. We weren't passing a budget, we weren't funding government, and we weren't doing regular order in terms of appropriations bills. So many of us ran to say: Enough, we are going to change things here. With all due respect to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, they neglected this function—no budget, no appropriations bills—for years. The most basic function of government was not happening in the Senate.

So many of us campaigned to change that—to work hard to change that—because we knew that is what the American people wanted. And we have done it. We are starting to do it. For example, we passed the budget resolution.

If we look at the 10 years out of our budget versus the 10 years out of the President's budget, we cut $5 to $7 trillion in terms of the President's wasteful spending. That is serious. We did that. We passed the budget resolution. We debated it here for a number of weeks, not days. The other side of the aisle hadn't done that for years.

When I went back home and said we did that, a lot of people in Alaska said: Well, big deal, my household passes a budget every year. My business passes a budget every year. The State of Alaska passes a budget every year.

But it is a big deal because we hadn't done it here. But now we are doing it because that is what we committed to do.

So that is one step: We passed a budget. Then the Members of this body, working hard, particularly through the Appropriations Committee, passed 12 appropriations bills—9 of which passed out of the committee with very, very strong bipartisan votes—to fund the government. So far so good—that is what we are supposed to be doing here. We are back to work, back to regular order.

One of these bills was the Defense appropriation bill. What does that mean? It is kind of a wonky term. That is the bill that funds our military, that funds our national defense, that funds the sergeant in the Marine Corps and the Army—a really important bill. It passed out of the committee with a very strong bipartisan vote of 27 to 3. We almost can't get any more bipartisan than that, 27 to 3. Virtually everybody, Democrats and Republicans, voted for that because they know how important it is.

So what happened today? We took the next step in the regular order process as we promised the American people to fund our government by bringing forward that bill. At 27 to 3, it should be no problem passing it in the Senate. Look at how many Democrats voted for that bill. So we wanted to move forward on that bill. We all know how critical that bill is—probably one of the most critical appropriations bills we have because it is funding the defense of our Nation and the brave men and women who serve our Nation.

So what happened in the vote today? Well, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle decided: No, we are going to filibuster that. I know we voted 27 to 3 to move it out of committee, but now we are going to filibuster that.

In fact, according to the leader on the other side of the aisle, the Democrats are saying they are going to filibuster all 12 appropriations bills—all 12 of them.

Let me repeat. Here is what is happening. We passed the budget. We passed, for the most part, very bipartisan appropriations bills. Let me read a few of them: Agriculture, 28 to 2, out of committee; Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, 27 to 3; Defense, 27 to 3; Energy and Water, 26 to 4; State and Foreign Operations, 27 to 3.

This is a list of very bipartisan work by the Senate in the Appropriations Committee. I commend all the Members of this body who worked so hard on that. But now we hear that the other side is going to filibuster every single one of these. They did it today. That is actually the second time they did it with regard to the Defense appropriations bill. They are going to do it again and again and again.

It is my view that we should bring all 12 of these bills to the Senate floor, like we did today. We are trying to move forward and fund this government. We are trying to get back to regular order, the way the Senate used to work. It hadn't worked like that for years, but now we are trying to do that. If the other side of the aisle wants to continually filibuster the funding of our government, let them stand up to the American people and do that.

For example, I think we should bring up the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill that passed out of committee 21 to 9. It is very important for the country. Let's bring it up. Let's have a vote on it. If they want to filibuster that, I think they will have to explain why they are not supporting veterans.

This will make one thing clear, though. In all the talk we hear in the media every day about Republicans wanting to shut down the government, I think it is pretty clear when we look at what is happening here with the filibustering of all the appropriations bills that there is another side to this story. There is another side to this story. The

defunding of the government—of our troops, as we saw today—is happening because of the filibuster.

It is my hope that our friends in the media, who love to talk about this story, are going to look a little bit more deeply—look at these votes today, look at the budget, look at what the Appropriations Committee has been doing—and tell the real story. There are people very focused on stopping the funding of the government. We saw it today. It is not the majority party in the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

PAIN-CAPABLE UNBORN CHILD PROTECTION BILL

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from the great State of Alaska for his comments. I wish to be associated with those comments. I also thank him not only for his service in the Senate but for his service in the Marines.

I stand here today heartbroken over the failure to advance a bill that would protect the lives of unborn babies—babies who are old enough, who, with proper care, can survive when born at this age.

Many of my colleagues have spoken regarding all that we know about the science of fetal development—how unborn babies feel pain, when they feel pain, the related neurological data, and so on. Others will tell us that the United States is out of step with the overwhelming majority of other nations on this policy. Others will show poll numbers that demonstrate that an overwhelming majority of Americans, especially women, think this policy is a good policy—the policy that was voted down in this Chamber today.

But we don't need to know all that to know what is right and what is wrong. We know what is right. Any of us who have ever watched our wife's belly grow, as I did with the miracle of my son and daughter; any of us who have ever experienced the excitement before learning the results of a prenatal test; any of us who have seen an ultrasound or attended a baby shower, we all know. We know because of the hundreds and thousands of friends, family, neighbors, and coworkers whose own baby stories we have watched over our lives. The stories of successful deliveries, the complications, the joys, the tragedies, and all of these stories—the beautiful stories and the bittersweet stories—have taught us the truth about the unborn. We all know. We don't need to be scientists to understand what the science can tell us.

So I wish to tell some stories that illustrate what this bill, which was voted down today in this Chamber, is about.

I want to start with Samuel. As early as 1999, we were doing fetal surgeries here in the United States. Samuel's parents, Julie and Alex, were given the terrible news that their unborn son had permanent nerve damage from an opening in his spine due to spina bifida. Doctors said that half of all babies with spina bifida were aborted, but Julie and Alex chose a different path for Samuel. This was at 21 weeks. Samuel was operated on in utero. Today he is all grown up. Samuel said that he believes God sent him to Earth to help stop abortion.

Then there is Elijah.

When April Leffingwell's ultrasound at 20 weeks revealed a life-threatening tumor growing in Elijah's left lung, she knew his life was in grave danger. Thankfully, this fateful diagnosis was not the end of the story. Instead, Elijah's life was saved by an innovative fetal surgery performed at just 25 weeks. During the surgery, 3 years ago, 5-month-old baby Elijah was given anesthesia to protect him from pain. He was then partially removed from his mother's womb, and the life-threatening tumor the size of an orange was removed. Elijah's primary surgeon at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia said that he would have died if the operation were not done before birth. Now, several years later, after a challenging beginning, Elijah is a healthy and very active toddler.

Here is another story, about Micah.

Micah's mom Danielle went into labor and delivered Micah when he was just 22 weeks old. This is little Micah shortly after delivery as shown in this picture. She was given the worst of news—that her son would not survive. But Micah received state-of-the-art care and spent the next 4 months in the neonatal intensive care unit, or NICU. Micah's parents kept vigil at his side and watched all the developmental milestones, which should have been reached in utero, be reached in the artificial environment in the NICU. And slowly, day by day, he made it. He thrived and is 3 years old.

Micah and his family are here today at the Senate. I met them earlier today. He actually gave me this band that says ''Miracles for Micah.'' Surely my colleagues can see what Micah's parents see; that their son was just as precious at 22 weeks as he is today at 3 years old.

There are more stories. Some of us remember former Philadelphia Eagles player Vaughn Hebron. Vaughn and his wife Kim were given the news that their twins, 5 months old in utero, were facing what is called twin-transfusion—a life-threatening condition. Doctors said there was a 70-percent chance that one or both of the twins would die, but Vaughn and his wife chose to fight for their boys. They received state-of-the-art care and both boys are now healthy teenagers.

All of these children—the Hebron twins, Micah, Elijah, Samuel—there is only one difference between them and the babies aborted, dismembered, and sold by Planned Parenthood; the only difference is that these children were wanted and welcomed. If they are wanted and welcome, we fight like mad to save them. We throw everything at them that science and medicine can possibly do. We save their lives and we create miracles every day.

We need this bill to protect those poor babies who are unwanted and unwelcome. We don't strip born children of their right to life and protection just because their parents don't want them. We take care of them at taxpayer expense. We try to help their parents support them. We provide health care for them. If their parents will not or can't raise them, we seek adoptive families for them. But if they are a few months, even a few days or a few minutes younger, our law denies them the opportunity to grow, to learn, and to become the bright-eyed, world-changing children we all cherish and protect.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. I think this one says it better than anything any of us will say on this Senate floor. This is a baby in utero around 20 weeks. There is simply no arguing that this is a baby. At this age, she is about 10 ounces, about 10 inches long—about the size of a big banana. A baby this age is practicing swallowing for the first time. She is moving. Her skin is thickening up so it is starting to lose that translucent look. A good fraction of the babies who are delivered prematurely at this age survive. A few weeks later, almost all of them survive.

The bill we voted on today would have protected babies from this age and older—when they can feel pain, when they look like humans in photographs and sonograms, and when they are kicking around in their mama's bellies. Although we didn't advance this bill today, we must not give up. I am not giving up on my colleagues because I believe justice can still win out. This bill must eventually pass. History will clothe us in disgrace if we fail to do so. The law should protect these children. Nobody put it better than the late great children's author Dr. Seuss when he said: ''A person's a person, no matter how small.''

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

CORPORATE CULTURE IN THE AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, Volkswagen has become part of the lexicon of the American economy, American culture. Volkswagen Beetles, at the time when I was growing up as a kid, were all a part of the America we know and love. Now we find out that Volkswagen for years has been purposely deceiving the American public—for that matter, their customers around the world—on their diesel cars by deceptively telling them what the mileage is on the cars. And oh, by the way, in the United States, because they were supposedly getting great mileage, there was a tax benefit to the purchasers of those vehicles.

What in the world is happening to the American automobile industry and those foreign manufacturers that are selling automobiles here to take advantage of the American automobile-

consuming public? It is an outrage that VW would take advantage of its consumers by purposely deceiving them on their mileage on diesel vehicles.

First there was General Motors. Over 100 people died as a result of a defective ignition switch that General Motors did not tell us about, and in the process just recently—last week—announced a fine of $900 million. Where are our U.S. regulatory agencies? What is the Obama administration doing about this in its regulatory agencies? Why are they not dropping the hammer on corporations and corporate executives that are purposely deceiving the American people about faulty automobile products that cause the loss of lives and property? It was General Motors. Then it was Takata airbags, which are in a lot of automobiles but especially in Hondas and Toyotas. We know that a number of people have lost their lives, a number of people have been maimed, and they are driving around with an airbag in the middle of the steering wheel—which now there have been millions and millions of recalls—and in the middle of that steering wheel is an explosive grenade because it hasn't been replaced.

Today, Volkswagen admitted, over the course of the last half dozen years, that they have deceived people on their diesel vehicles by deceptively telling them what the gas mileage was. Has the corporate culture in what is an automobile society shrunk so low that we can't be upfront when our products are defective or when we are trying to gain competitive advantage? I lay this not only on the corporate culture, I lay it at the feet of the U.S. regulatory agencies that ought to be doing their job and ought to be doing it in a forceful way. Then there ought to be some prosecutions, and corporate executives who knew this and have done it ought to be going to jail.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, in the coming days we know that we are going to have an extraordinary visit. This is a historic occasion. We are going to gather both Houses of Congress to hear from Pope Francis. During his time in the United States, Pope Francis has chosen to do something that I think is extraordinary—to visit with the imprisoned.

In his address here, he may or may not discuss the American criminal justice system, but this visit alone, which speaks to something deep within the Catholic faith, deep within the Christian religion, reflected in Matthew 25: ''I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'' This step by the Pope, to me, is an extraordinary accomplishment in bringing a further highlight to the challenges we have in the United States with our criminal justice system.

The Pope has predicated his time as Pope on an ideal of mercy. His motto, ''miserando atque eligendo,'' which translates to ''to be shown mercy and be chosen,'' to me is extraordinary. I actually believe the Pope and what he is doing resonates not just in a religious sense with the Christian faith but in the American sense with our shared collective values.

I have taken the time to speak on the Senate floor on numerous occasions about our criminal justice system from many perspectives, but on this occasion, I would like to talk about those moral values which do not divide us as a nation but unite us. Those are values deep within the core of our country, part of our heritage, part of our songs, our pledges, and our words.

We know the criminal justice system as it stands right now has many issues. If it was just analyzed on an economic angle, it would be enough to show how this criminal justice system is out of step with who we are as a people. We know that right now we in America are imprisoning more people than anybody else on the globe. We are the ''incarceration nation'' when it comes to comparing ourselves with other global nations. We are about 5 percent of the global population but 25 percent of the global prison population. One out of every four people on the planet Earth who are incarcerated are in the United States of America. The cost of that, from a fiscal perspective, is incredible.

We spend over a quarter of a trillion dollars every single year on our criminal justice system, a significant cost to American taxpayers. It is estimated that between 1980 and 2004, we would have had 20 percent less poverty in America if not for mass incarceration. Think about that for a second—the costs of poverty on our productivity. We know that only about 9 percent of children who are poor are going to go to college. There are significant costs associated with poverty, both fiscal and moral. The poverty rate would be 20 percent lower if we had incarceration rates at the same levels as our industrial peers.

At a time that our roads and our bridges are crumbling, as we as a nation have seen ourselves having gone from having the best infrastructure on the globe to now being a nation with an infrastructure that is not even ranked in the top 10 globally, at a time that we have seen investment go down as a percentage of our GDP, one thing we have seen go up is our investment in the prison infrastructure.

We know that between 1990 and 2005, a new prison opened in the United States every 10 days. We have seen our prison population on a Federal level go up over the last 30 years about 800 percent. Looking at this from the fiscal perspective, we know we are digging a hole for ourselves—self-inflicted economic wounds that are just unnecessary for a nation of free people. Take for example a report from the Center for Economic and Policy Research. They concluded that in the year 2008 alone, ex-offender unemployment losses to our economy were the equivalent of 1.5 to 1.7 million workers or $57 billion to $65 billion annually. In other words, when our folks come out of prison, as most do, they find it so hard to reintegrate into our economy. They find it hard to start jobs as there are bars to employment, finding it hard to start businesses as there are bars to business licenses. And that loss to our economy is the equivalent of about 1.6 million workers or $57 billion to $65 billion annually.

This reality, the fiscal reality alone—before we even talk about our values as a country, before we even talk about our morals—should be enough for us to find greater urgency about the need to reform our criminal justice system, especially because States in America are beginning to show that you can save taxpayer dollars by reducing incarceration levels and empowering people to succeed while simultaneously lowering the crime rate. This alone should be enough to show that we have a broken criminal justice system that violates the ideals of economic prudence and fiscal conservatism. We are digging an economic hole for ourselves.

While the Pope will talk to us with a moral force during his visit, it is also important to understand that as a moral nation, the values we have put forth into the world are being violated by our criminal justice system as well.

This body has been a body that has spoken with clarity on numerous moral issues—from the Civil Rights Act to the Fair Housing Act—but now we are seeing that we are failing to do what is necessary when it comes to living up to those powerful words of equal justice under the law. It is inscribed on the Supreme Court just hundreds of yards from where I am standing right now.

We now know that there is no difference in drug usage and selling rates between African Americans, Whites, and Latinos. Yet our criminal justice system is incarcerating minorities in this country well disproportionate to their numbers in those drug crimes.

Even at a time when we have had our last three Presidents admit to using drugs—the last two admitted to violating the drug laws—we still have a nation in which we are treating certain people differently.

Take, for example, that we now know that African Americans and Whites have no difference for selling and using drugs, but Blacks are about 3.7 times more likely to be arrested for a marijuana related crime. Take, for example, that African Americans and Whites are arrested for the same crimes, and Blacks are given sentences that are about 20 percent longer than Whites for those similar crimes. African Americans are about 21 percent more likely to receive a mandatory minimum than Whites facing similar charges.

This disproportionate experience under the law has created harrowing

results within our Nation. There are more African Americans in jail, prison or under State or Federal supervision today than there were African Americans enslaved in 1850.

Even though African Americans make up 14.7 percent of the population in my State of New Jersey, they make up 61 percent of the total correctional population. One in three African-American men born in 2001 will go to prison during their lifetime. These numbers are astonishing, and in many ways they are being fueled by a criminal justice system that, from arrests to sentencing, is treating African Americans harsher than their White peers. This value of equal justice under the law is not being fulfilled.

Latinos face the same challenges. Native Americans are also grossly overrepresented in our criminal justice system, with incarceration rates that are 38 percent higher than the national average. There is no difference in proclivity for drug crimes among people of color, but we have a system that actually punishes those who are of color in different ways. We need to begin, as a Congress and a nation, to find ways to have drug laws that make sense. The explosion of incarcerations in this country was fueled by the war on drugs, and we know that certain communities are facing the harsh impact of that enforcement in ways that other communities are not.

We need to reform our harsh mandatory minimum policies. For too long we have taken away judicial discretion and tied the hands of sentencing experts who can and should weigh other factors when it comes to making sentencing decisions. We need to now avoid what Congress intended—giving these harsh sentences to people who are not drug kingpins or large players but often low-level offenders.

This idea of equal opportunity as well is something that is of value and is deep within our system. Unfortunately, the trends we see in our criminal justice system aren't limited to adults and the treatment under the law, but they are also showing that our kids as well do not always face equal pathways to opportunity. Today we know that the number of children who are born to people who are incarcerated or have an incarcerated parent is growing astonishingly. Right now, 1 in 28 children is growing up with a parent in prison, and 1 in 9 African-American kids, as a result of this mass incarceration disproportionately hitting minority communities, is growing up with a parent behind bars. These kids often struggle more in school, have families who are often poorer, and have limited opportunities of success.

Over half of imprisoned parents were the primary earners for their children prior to their incarceration, and a child with an incarcerated father is more likely to be suspended from school than a peer without an incarcerated father—23 percent compared to 4 percent. These are serious gulfs in opportunity being created by a broken criminal justice system. The gulfs of opportunity between young people based on race start young and actually only grow with time.

For too many children, zero-tolerance discipline policies in schools across America serve as a gateway into the criminal justice system and a lifetime of devastating collateral consequences. And just as in the American criminal justice system, too many young people of color in America are falling into the trap of that school-to-prison pipeline.

According to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights in March 2014, Black students were suspended at a rate three times greater than White students. On average, 5 percent of White students are suspended compared to 16 percent of Black students. Students who have been suspended or expelled as a part of their school's disciplinary policy are 3 times as likely to become involved in the juvenile justice system within the next year. There is evidence showing that kids of different races face the harshness of those policies in different ways. In other words, minority students are often treated harshly while others see leniency. We need to begin to enact commonsense policies that provide for equal opportunity—those commonsense policies that don't lead to suspension or involvement with police officers when in the past the infraction typically would have been dealt with the school internally. We need to find a system where a child's one mistake does not become a lifetime sentence, where children are empowered to succeed and not fear a retribution that destabilizes their lives.

We also know that it is important that we begin to think: Are we a nation of second chances? Are we a nation where words such as redemption and mercy have meaning? Are we a nation that can live up to these ideals where just because you fall down and stumble and make a mistake, you cannot be someone who can still stand up again and make your way?

We know that every single year approximately 600,000 Americans finish their prison sentences after paying their debt to society and reenter their communities. They often find themselves unable to work, to vote, to get back to school or to get a loan. The collateral consequences are extraordinary.

The American Bar Association has identified over 46,000 collateral consequences that impact people with criminal records. About 60 to 70 percent of them are employment-related. In other words, even though we are saying to people who have paid their debt that they now need to get back to work, we are actually putting up bars which prevent them from doing so. They are finding it hard to get a job, get a business license, get a loan, or get a Pell grant, and if they fall and stumble, they often find it hard to even get food stamps or get the social safety net that often keeps people from abject desperation. These realities place too many roadblocks in the way of people coming home.

During Pope Francis's visits to prisons, he is said to have asked himself: Why did God allow that I should not be here? But for the grace of God.

In advance of his visit, I believe we should be asking ourselves: What do these ideals of mercy and redemption mean to us—this idea that when we see people who are broken by society, we should understand that we should be investing in their success? It actually not only makes moral sense to do so, but it makes sense to do so because we will reap the economic benefit.

If you take, for example, Americans who are suffering from addiction, we now know that $1 invested in people with addiction to get treatment produces a benefit in reducing interactions with the police and incarceration by $4 to $7. Yet the overwhelming majority of people with drug addictions do not get treatment. Not only is that fiscally unsound, but that makes no sense in the ideals of our morals as a nation, that we should help people who are broken by disease.

This is the point we have come to as a nation, where we know that doing the morally right thing actually helps to save the dollars of our taxpayers so that we can keep that in our own pockets or invest them in areas that we so desperately need.

Take, for example, a simple thing that companies around this country, such as Bed Bath & Beyond and Starbucks, are doing but we don't do in the Federal Government—this commonsense idea that those who have paid their debt will be given a level playing field and a fair shot to get a job to prove that they are worthy of work. Some people call this Ban the Box, something that 18 States have done. But here in the Federal Government, we still make people—right at the point of application—check the box and say that they have been formally incarcerated, which means, for many Americans, that it gives them 50 to 60 percent less chance of even getting an interview or getting an opportunity to demonstrate their worth and make their case.

We know that simple things such as moving that time of disclosure of a previous criminal conviction to later in the process could elevate the chances of getting more people to work. And when they get to work, they begin to be there for their families, their kids, our economy, and they become productive, as opposed to what we have now, which over time is a recidivism rate—the rate at which people go back to prison—that is upwards of 75 percent, costing us again billions of dollars as taxpayers.

This system is broken. It makes no economic sense, but more importantly, it violates our ideals as a nation of equal justice under the law, the ideal of

having a second chance in our country, and the ideal of equal opportunity for all.

We must now embrace the urgency of the moment. To have a wasteful system that is broken, that further harms and injures people with illnesses—whether it be mental health disorder or an addiction—that aggravates them with practices such as putting children in solitary confinement—all of these things violate our principals as a nation, and it is time for us to join together and embrace change.

I feel honored that right now in this country there is an emerging bipartisan and nonpartisan coalition around criminal justice reform. We see people from all across the political perspective approaching it from different perspectives—from Christian Evangelicals to fiscal conservatives to civil libertarians to civil rights activists—all beginning to say the system is morally bankrupt. It is bankrupting States and our Nation. It is a violation of who we are as a country, and it just makes no sense.

It was James Baldwin who once said:

> There is never time in the future in which we will work out our salvation. The challenge is in the moment; the time is always now.

With this visit from the Pope and his further spotlighting our criminal justice system, let us find that moral urgency in our Nation. Let us find the grit that we have shown in the past for overcoming injustice. Let us join together and begin with even more urgency to do the hard work of correcting the ills within our criminal justice system, of fixing what is broken, and making right in America that which we hold so dear—that we are a nation indeed with liberty and justice for all.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I know my friend, the distinguished Senator from Vermont, has been waiting, and so I will be very quick with the statement that I am going to give.

REMEMBERING JIM SANTINI

Mr. President, today Nevada lost a historic figure. This morning former U.S. Congressman Jim Santini of Nevada passed away. He was a remarkably good person—a tremendous person who understood Nevada so well.

He was a native Nevadan, born in Reno. He came from a real heritage that caused him to love his State of Nevada. His grandfather, Walter E. Clark, was the longest serving president at the University of Nevada. His uncle is a famous writer—a really celebrated author—Walter Van Tillburg Clark. It has been a long time, but what a great writer. His most famous work was ''The Ox-Bow Incident.'' I read it again a few years ago. It was made into a movie, which I watched again. It was considered by most to be the most—actually, the first modern Western novel.

So Jim Santini breathed what Nevada was all about. He knew the State extremely well. He graduated from the University of Nevada—the same school where his grandfather was the president. He became close friends with former Senator Richard Bryan of Nevada, a two-term Governor and a striking figure in his own right. They were inseparable friends. They were in college together. They went to the same law school—Hastings Law School in San Francisco.

Jim graduated from law school in 1962. He immediately decided he would serve his country, and for 3 years he served in the U.S. Army. His service to his State and country spans many decades.

His good friend Richard Bryan convinced him that he should move from Reno. The growth in the State was in the southern part of the State, the Las Vegas area. Jim—in some respects reluctantly—moved from his roots to southern Nevada, where he excelled. He worked as a deputy district attorney. After the first public defender in the State of Nevada decided to run for public office, he was replaced—that is Richard Bryan, the first public defender in Clark County—he was replaced with his good friend Jim Santini, who became a public defender.

It was a short time thereafter that he was elected justice of the peace of Las Vegas. During this period of time, the role of the justice of the peace changed. It became more of a judicial officer rather than someone who became fabulously wealthy by marrying hundreds and hundreds of people. That is the way it used to be. He did a very good job as justice of the peace. He was so impressive that the Governor of the State of Nevada, Mike O'Callaghan, appointed him to serve as a Nevada district court judge representing Clark County.

In 1972 Jim ran for Nevada's at-large congressional seat. From 1864, when Nevada became a State, until 1982, Nevada only had one Congressman, one Member of Congress, and it was an at-large seat. And when Jim ran for that in 1972, he ran against Republican incumbent David Towell, who just 2 years before was in a race with Congressman Walter S. Baring, who served in Congress for some 22 years representing Nevada's at-large congressional seat and who was defeated in the primary. But David Towell came from nowhere and beat the Democrat in that case. Santini came right back, and David Towell was a one-term Congressman.

Jim represented the State of Nevada in Congress very honorably for four terms. He was well respected, well regarded, and very popular in the State of Nevada. However, in 1982 Jim decided to run for the Senate, and he was not successful. In 1986 he ran for the Senate again. I was his opponent. It was a relatively close race, but when that race was over, it was over. I knew Jim before he and I became opponents. We worked together on many different projects. We never had a cross word. To this day we never had a cross word.

Jim became a counsel—a lawyer—and a lobbyist for America's tourism and travel industry. He worked to bring tourists to the United States and to the State of Nevada, and he did it very admirably and very well.

Jim Santini had a wonderful wife, Ann Santini. She has quite a career in her own right. She is the director of international affairs for the LDS Church here in Washington, DC. They have four children: Lisa, Lori, Mark, and J.D. They have 11 grandchildren.

Before leaving Jim Santini, we have to speak about his uniqueness. Here is a man who had—there may be someone who has a better arrowhead collection than Jim Santini; I just don't know who it would be. He spent many decades—a lot of the time in Nevada but around the country—collecting arrowheads. He had a great collection of arrowheads. He also collected Indian baskets, and in Nevada we had probably the most famous basket weaver in the history of the country, a woman by the name of Dat So La Lee. She is really a very famous woman. Many of her baskets are worth over $1 million. She made baskets this big—woven, of course, by hand—and baskets this large. Jim collected baskets. I don't know how many he wound up having of Dat So La Lee's, but I am sure he had some.

It is with a great deal of sadness that I report to my friends in Nevada and the friends Jim had here in Washington that Jim passed away this morning. I said that earlier. I will miss him. He and I exchanged letters right after the first of the year, right after I got hurt, injured my eye. He always was a kind, gracious man, and I will miss him very much, as will everyone in Nevada and his friends here in Washington.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

PAPAL VISIT

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I am delighted that Pope Francis will be addressing a joint session of Congress on Thursday.

The Pope has played, in my view, an extraordinary role since he assumed his position in speaking out with courage and brilliance about some of the most important issues facing our world. From the moment he was elected, he immediately let it be known that he would be a different kind of Pope, a different kind of religious leader. In choosing his Papal name—Francis—he said:

> Francis of Assisi. For me, he is the man of poverty, the man of peace, the man who loves and protects creation.

What I want to do in a short period of time is read some of the very profound and important statements Pope Francis has made over the last several years. They are incisive, they are courageous, and they speak to a world in trouble that needs the kind of leadership that he is providing.

Let me quote from a number of the statements he has made.

Quote:

> While the income of a minority is increasing exponentially, that of the majority is crumbling. This imbalance results from ideologies which uphold the absolute autonomy of markets and financial speculation, and thus deny the right of control to States, which are themselves charged with providing for the common good.

Obviously, he is not talking about the United States; he is talking about the global economy. But certainly in our country, when he talks about the income of the minority increasing exponentially and that of the majority crumbling, he is, of course, right. We have right now in our country the top one-tenth of 1 percent owning almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent. We have about 58 percent of all new income being created now going to the top 1 percent. In the last several years, we have seen the 14 wealthiest people in America increase their wealth by $156 billion, and that increase in wealth is more wealth than is owned by the bottom 40 percent of the American people.

As the Pope points out, this is not by any means just an American issue; this is a global issue. We are moving toward a period where very shortly the top 1 percent of the people on the planet will own more wealth than the bottom 99 percent. To me, that is immoral, that is wrong, that is unsustainable, and I am glad the Pope has raised that issue.

He talks about another issue which is even more profound. It is one thing to talk about income and wealth inequality, and it is another thing to talk about poverty.

Here, he says:

> We have created new idols. The worship of the golden calf of old has found a new and heartless image in the cult of money and the dictatorship of an economy which is faceless and lacking any truly humane goal.

''The worship of the golden calf of old has found a new and heartless image in the cult of money.'' What does that mean? Well, I take it to mean that we are living in a society which turns its back on people who work hard, decent people, people who are good parents, but yet we worship those people who for whatever reason—sometimes honestly and with creativity, sometimes dishonestly and illegally—have become millionaires and billionaires. Those are the people we worship. The more money they make, the more they get worshipped. I think the Pope is right in saying that is not something we should be doing.

In another statement, which is certainly relevant for a lot of the discussions we have here on the floor of the Senate, he said:

> In this context, some people continue to defend trickle-down theories which assume that economic growth, encouraged by a free market, will inevitably succeed in bringing about greater justice and inclusiveness in the world. This opinion, which has never been confirmed by the facts, expresses a crude and naive trust in the goodness of those wielding economic power and in the sacralized workings of the prevailing economic system.

What is he talking about? He is talking about a lot of what has gone on here in this country for many decades. There is a theory, which the Pope is right in saying has never been confirmed by the facts—quite the contrary—that if we give huge tax breaks to billionaires and large corporations, somehow that money will trickle down to the middle class and working class. Well, that theory has not proved to be true. Under trickle-down economics, the rich get richer and virtually everybody else gets poorer. I think the Pope is quite right in making that point.

Let me again quote the Pope. This is what he said:

> Man is not in charge today, money is in charge. Money rules.

Money rules. Well, 5 years ago the U.S. Supreme Court by a 5-to-4 decision passed the disastrous Citizens United decision which basically said to the wealthiest people in this country: You already own much of the economy; now we are going to give you the opportunity to buy the United States Government. And that is exactly what they are now attempting to do. Money rules. You have one family—the Koch brothers—who will spend $900 million in this election cycle to elect candidates who will protect the wealthy and powerful. That is more money than will be spent by either the Democratic or Republican Party. When one family is spending more money than either of the two major political parties, I think it is an example of what the Pope is talking about when he says ''money rules.''

Money does rule, and that is why, in my view, we have to overturn Citizens United and move to the public funding of elections—so the wealthy and the powerful will not be able to buy elections.

He also said something very interesting about the media. This is what he said:

> These things become the norm: that some homeless people die of cold on the streets is not news. In contrast, a ten point drop on the stock markets of some cities is a tragedy.

Well, what is news? Is he right? We talk about the stock market going up, the stock market going up. It is big news. The 45 million Americans living in poverty—I don't hear much discussion about that. There are thousands of people dying every single year because they don't have health insurance and can't get to a doctor when they need to. That ain't big news—not big news at all. I think it is an interesting point about what constitutes news, and I think the Pope makes a very good point in that regard.

Let me give another quote:

> It is a well-known fact that current levels of production are sufficient, yet millions of people are still suffering and dying of starvation. This, dear friends, is truly scandalous.

I think what the Pope is talking about is that in a world where we have enormous productive capability—industrial, agricultural—we have a situation where children die of diseases that are preventable all over the world, where people go hungry all over the world. Yet, as he says, our current levels of production are sufficient. We are producing enough to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to provide what people need, and yet we have an economy which works day after day to make billionaires richer and turns its back on desperate people all over the world.

Let me end with this quote:

> Today everything comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where the powerful feed upon the powerless. As a consequence, masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalized: without work, without possibilities, without any means of escape.

That is certainly true in the United States. It is certainly truer all over the world. We are living in a world of the survival of the fittest. If you are poor, if you are unemployed, if you are hungry, government turns its back on you. But if you are rich, if you are powerful, if you can make campaign contributions of hundreds of millions of dollars, we love you, we welcome you, and we need you more and more.

I think during this week where we welcome the Pope to Washington, DC, I would hope that some of my colleagues would examine the very profound lessons he is teaching people all over this world.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

(The remarks of Mr. WICKER pertaining to the introduction of S. 2067 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BARRASSO). The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I rise to speak about a very important issue. It is a fundamental constitutional issue for this body and part of our duty in the Senate and the Congress; that is, to ensure next week the funding for the government which expires at the end of the month. With only 1 week until the current government funding runs out, it is our responsibility to work together to make sure that the government keeps running, that we do not disrupt people's lives, that we do not end up spending more money because we shut the government down to reopen it, and that we provide certainty with all of the challenges we face at home and, of course, the threats we face abroad.

An issue has come up that is a very important issue, and that is an organization called Planned Parenthood and holding Planned Parenthood accountable in the wake of deeply disturbing videos that discuss the appalling practice of harvesting the organs and body parts of unborn babies.

Like Americans across all political spectrums, I was just sick—sick to see the contents of recent videos that have been disclosed that show a callous disregard by officials at Planned Parenthood for the dignity of human life. These videos have shocked the conscience of people across our country because this organization does receive taxpayer funding. I understand why we have had an important debate in this body about redirecting this funding because of Planned Parenthood's actions and fully investigating what was revealed in these disturbing videos that show the practice of the harvesting of organs and body parts of unborn babies.

So I support the efforts of the Judiciary Committee to investigate these disturbing videos. I also do not believe it is appropriate that taxpayer funds should be used to fund a private organization that performs hundreds of thousands of abortions each year and that engages in the horrific practices that were shown in these videos.

That is why last month I joined a bipartisan majority of Senators in voting to redirect Federal funding from Planned Parenthood to community health centers that provide women's health services, including mammograms, cancer screenings, and contraceptives. In New Hampshire there are more than 30 community health centers, compared to 5 Planned Parenthood clinics.

But when we had this debate and vote on the Senate floor, we received only 53 votes in favor of redirecting this money from Planned Parenthood to community health centers which provide women's health services, falling well short of the 60-vote threshold required to advance this legislation in the Senate. Yet despite already having had a vote on this, which failed the 60-vote threshold in the Senate, there are some that are pushing to attach this issue to the funding of the government, even though when we had the vote here, we did not have the votes to get it passed in the Senate, and even though the President himself has explicitly said he would veto any bill that prohibits funding for Planned Parenthood or redirects that funding to community health centers.

In fact, the President is so dug in on funding for Planned Parenthood that he is prepared to let the government shut down over it. And those who are pushing the strategy, saying we should go forward with it anyway—they have not explained how we would obtain 67 votes in the Senate.

When we had the vote on it, we only got 53, not even enough to advance the legislation in the Senate, which requires 60. The President certainly knows that we do not have 67 votes in the Senate to override his veto. Nevertheless, those who are pushing the strategy to attach this to the government funding bill—this issue of redirecting the funding—also know that there are not 60 votes in the Senate, never mind 67 to override a Presidential veto. So the result is that if we passed the bill, even if we could get the 60 votes, the President is sure to veto it, and the 67 votes are not there to override his veto.

In the end, we are heading for an imminent government shutdown if this is not resolved. Everyone who looks at this issue knows the reality of where the votes lie. In fact, those on my side of the aisle who have been pushing the strategy of pass the bill, send it to the President for his veto, I have asked them the question: Let's assume we get the 60 votes to do that; first of all, how do we get those 60 votes? I have not received an answer to that question. Then I have asked the next question: Even if we could get those 60 votes to pass it out of the Senate and to send this to the President's desk with a government funding bill that redirects the money to Planned Parenthood over his opposition and he vetoes it, where do the 67 votes come from? I have not received an answer to that.

So I am here on the floor today to say: I am tired of the political games. I am tired of the President's game on this, that he is so dug in on this issue that he would be willing to let the government shut down. I am tired of the people on my side of the aisle who are pushing this strategy even though they know they do not have the votes to have it pass the Senate, and they certainly don't have the votes to override a Presidential veto, so, therefore, they cannot answer the question: What is the end game for success here, even if you feel as passionately about these issues as we all do?

So here we are again with the political posturing on both sides. I don't want to play this game anymore. I think it is too important that we not relive the movie of where we were in 2013 when the government shut down because I asked the very same question then, when the issue was defunding ObamaCare. I asked the question: How does this end? How does it end successfully to defund ObamaCare? How does it end without shutting down the government? I never received an answer then, and I have not received an answer now from those who are pushing this strategy.

We saw the movie in 2013. I do not think we should relive that movie. Let's remember what happened. When you shut the government down and you reopen it, it actually costs us more money. So if you care about the fiscal state of the country, let's not waste money shutting down the government with no results. You think about the economy and the disruption in people's lives. I remember my constituents calling me on the phone, because I was answering my phones. I remember people who saved for years for a family vacation to our national parks and could not participate in that family vacation and lost the money they had sunk into it for years in their savings for their big family vacation because people were pushing to keep the government shut down, even though they had no strategy for achieving a result on it.

I remember the uncertainty and the hardship for working families and our military. Even though we keep our national security piece open during a government shutdown, there is so much uncertainty about whom that covers and whom it doesn't. When we look at the threats we are facing around the world right now, we do not need uncertainty when it comes to those who keep us safe at home on the law enforcement end, on our intel, on our military, and all the civilian workforce that supports them and makes sure they can do their job every single day.

The bottom line is, in 2013 we did not get a result, the funding for ObamaCare continued, the government was shut down, it cost us more money and disruption. We never got an answer then for how that would end successfully. Here we find ourselves again, the same group of people pushing the same strategy on the Planned Parenthood issue, saying we should shut the government down again, even though they cannot answer the question: How do we get to 60 votes? How do we get to 67 votes so that you can actually achieve a result here? I think the answer is that they don't know the answer, because we all know where the votes are. It is not going to happen.

So I am here on the floor because I feel strongly. I agree with the National Right to Life on this. In a recent op-ed, the National Right to Life rightly points out that pursuing this shutdown strategy could actually undermine efforts to hold Planned Parenthood accountable, primarily by shifting public attention in the political blame game that would result inevitably from the shutdown. The National Right to Life also cited a study by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, which found that the majority of Federal funds flowing to Planned Parenthood would not even be temporarily interrupted if the government shut down because the funds flow from mandatory spending programs like Medicaid rather than the congressional funding process, which is the discretionary spending piece impacted by what we will vote on regarding the continuing resolution.

Again, this was the same issue that actually came up in 2013 when it came to the tactics of trying to defund ObamaCare without a strategy for success. Right now we are playing a game of chicken. It is a dangerous game. We already know as we stand here where the votes are and what it takes to keep the government open. Yet, as I understand it, we are going to be taking another vote on Thursday so we can show the proponents of those who are again seeking to attach the Planned Parenthood redirecting-of-funding issue to the government funding bill that, guess what, we already know the answer to this. We don't have the votes. We are not going to get to 60 in the Senate, never mind the 67 it would take to override a Presidential veto.

So we all know what it is going to take to keep the government open. I think we should have that vote now, instead of continuing to have the political show votes that show the people where we know the votes already are on this issue. That means a clean funding bill now, so that we are not wasting time, so that we are not bringing ourselves closer to the brink of a shutdown.

So in good conscience, while I fully support redirecting the money from Planned Parenthood to community health centers who serve women, I cannot in good conscience participate again in this process, one that would ensure we come closer to the brink of a shutdown, when I have not heard a strategy for success.

I think the American people are owed an answer to the question: What is your strategy of success if you are threatening to shut down the government? I would ask the same of President Obama: If this is such an important issue to you that you are willing also to participate in this exercise of threatening a shutdown, is it that important to you given that the money can be redirected to community health centers that provide services to women?

That said, it is time to quit the games on both sides of the aisle. I came here to solve problems. That means we need to address this issue now. We should have the vote on the clean funding bill now. We should make sure we keep the government running, given the challenges we are facing at home and abroad, so that we do not have shutdown 2 and relive the movie we saw in 2013, and that was not a good one for the country.

I hope we will take the vote right now instead of continuing to play political games on both sides of the aisle while the clock ticks down. This is a very important issue for our country, and I am prepared right now to vote for a bill that will keep the government funded.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. AYOTTE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

OIL EXPORT BAN

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, last week a bipartisan majority of Senators—Members of this body—voted to try to stop President Obama's dangerous and desperate deal with Iran—that is right, dangerous and desperate.

The President wants to give Iran relief from the economic sanctions the world imposed. I believe President Obama traded away these sanctions too readily and he got too little in return. These sanctions included limits on the sale of Iranian oil. According to one estimate, Iran could soon begin to export as many as 1 million additional barrels of oil each and every day. I know the money Iran makes from these sales will go to shoring up its economy, and it will go to building up Iran's military. Some of it will undoubtedly go to supporting global terrorists. That is what President Obama traded away. Iran will be allowed to sell its oil anywhere in the world, yet American oil producers are largely prohibited from selling American oil anywhere in the world. Apparently, that is exactly the way the White House wants to keep things.

There is legislation working its way through Congress right now to lift the ban on American crude oil exports. The Obama administration has said it doesn't support the bill. There is bipartisan support of the bill but not this White House—oh no. They think Congress shouldn't even get to decide. They think it should be up to Washington bureaucrats in the Obama administration to make the decisions. The administration thinks they are the only ones who should be allowed to decide whether the oil export ban gets lifted.

It was the Obama administration that let Iran off the hook by signing such a terrible deal. It is the Obama administration that now wants to lift the sanctions and give Iran access to more than $100 billion. Should the Obama administration be the one to decide whether Iran gets to sell its oil without American competition? Is that what the President wants? Why is the Obama administration so interested in making sure Iran's economy gets back on its feet faster?

The President ought to be focused on helping America's economy, not Iran's economy. Right now American producers export about 500,000 barrels of oil a day. Where does it go? It goes to Canada. Iran is exporting about 1 million barrels a day. But once President Obama lifts the sanctions, that number is going to jump to almost 2 million barrels a day—2 million barrels a day. So President Obama favors a situation where Iran will be allowed to export four times as much oil as America does—four times as much. That is what the President is in favor of. And Senate Democrats who voted to help the President lift the sanctions want the same thing. That is what they say, 4 to 1—Iran over the United States.

Republicans want something very different. If the export ban is lifted, U.S. energy producers could export another 1.6 million barrels a day. Our daily oil exports would jump from half a million barrels to about 2 million barrels. That is what we want, to lift the sanctions. At the same time, Republicans voted to keep the sanctions in place against Iran. So under Republican plans, America would be exporting twice as much oil as Iran.

The Democrats vote four for Iran, one for the United States, and Republicans voted two for the United States, one for Iran. That is the difference between what Washington Democrats want and what Senate Republicans want.

The Brookings Institution looked at this in September of 2014. They came out with a report. They looked at a variety of different scenarios for how much oil America might export. They found that for every scenario they looked at, ''there are positive gains for U.S. households,'' with the United States being able to export more crude oil. The Government Accountability Office said the same thing last year. It said that ''removing export restrictions is expected to increase the size of the economy''—that is the U.S. economy—''with implications for employment, investment, public revenue and trade.''

Those are key for America.

These studies and others predict that adding American crude oil to global supplies could ultimately reduce gasoline prices right here at home. By how much, you ask? Well, one study estimated it would save American consumers a combined average of almost $6 billion per year. This study found the savings would help increase the U.S. economy by about $38 billion by 2020. New oil exports could support an additional 300,000 jobs by 2020.

These are huge benefits for the American economy, for American families—all because we free up American energy and we allow it to compete in the world's markets.

There would also be benefits for America's foreign policy. More oil would reduce prices worldwide. That means the other countries that export a lot of oil won't be able to make as much money off of their own oil sales. They would have to compete with us. This includes Iran. It includes countries such as Russia and Venezuela that use the wealth from their energy sales to pilot their own economies and not for the good.

New oil exports would undercut the ability of those countries to do things that are not in America's best interest. It would also help American allies around the world. Poland gets 96 percent of its oil from Russia. When they are negotiating to buy more oil, they would love—love—the opportunity and the option of American oil as an alternative. Belgium gets 60 percent of its oil from Russia and Saudi Arabia. Japan gets 75 percent of its oil from Russia and the Middle East. All of these countries and many more around the world could benefit from U.S. oil being sold on the world market.

Of course, another country that would really be helped is Israel. President Obama's reckless deal with Iran has put Israel in a much more dangerous situation. Even the White House seems to recognize this. The Obama administration says that it plans to offer Israel more military aid—aid to be used to bolster Israel's defenses against Iran. But the administration should not stop at military aid; it should also

offer Israel the opportunity to import American oil. Israel has trouble buying oil from many of its neighboring countries because they do not recognize the State of Israel. That leaves places such as Russia and Iraqi Kurdistan as its largest suppliers of crude oil.

If the Israelis had the opportunity to buy from American oil producers instead, that would be a big help in making sure their oil supply is stable and secure. It would also help repair some of the significant damage the President's Iran deal did to the relations between our two countries.

This should be an easy call. Ending the ban on U.S. oil exports would be good for American families, good for our national security, and good for our allies. The Obama administration should change course now. The Obama administration should work with Congress to end this ban on American energy exports as quickly as possible.

This past Saturday marked 7 years since a Canadian company filed its application to build the Keystone KL Pipeline—7 years. It has been buried in the bureaucratic limbo of the State Department ever since. That pipeline would provide American jobs just as more oil exports would. Americans should not have to wait another 7 years for Washington to lift the oil export ban and unleash the power of American energy.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND NONPROFIT ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I rise today to talk about a critical issue that I think the Pope's arrival today in Washington really highlights, and I am hopeful we will be addressing it in this Chamber.

I wanted to join Senator WHITEHOUSE yesterday. He has been an unwavering voice on the need for Congress to take legislative action to address climate change. He hit a milestone in May of this year by giving his 100th speech on the floor calling on his colleagues to act on climate change. He has also brought together a group of Senators to form a climate action task force, and I am proud to be a member of the group.

I believe we need a strong energy agenda for America, one that recognizes the challenges of climate change and that empowers people to be part of the solution.

The Pope has called climate change ''one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day.'' He has gained international attention for his commitment to protecting our world and serving those in need. Thursday, when we have the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to hear from the Pope as he addresses Congress, I anticipate he will call on all Americans to come together to tackle many challenges, but among them is climate change.

During my time in the Senate, we have made some progress on this issue. In 2008 we took action to raise gas mileage standards for cars for the first time in decades. We have also made energy efficiency improvements for consumer goods and have maintained tax credits for energy-efficient products and renewable sources. We passed farm bills in 2008 and again in 2014 with a large number of conservation, environment, and energy groups strongly supporting them. As a member of the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, I have ensured that the energy title promoted investment in the next generation of biofuels crops, which are important renewable sources of energy. Earlier this year, we passed the Energy Efficiency Improvement Act of 2015, bipartisan legislation sponsored by Senators PORTMAN and SHAHEEN. It included the Water Heater Efficiency Act, which I worked on with Senator HOEVEN. This bipartisan measure enabled rural electric co-ops to optimize their energy management through continued use of energy-efficient water heaters. It also included measures to encourage energy efficiency practices in office spaces. These achievements are thanks to a combination of many factors. It continues to be the case that we need bipartisanship to move sound energy policy forward. And while we have taken some action, there is so much more to be done.

This summer, the Energy and Natural Resources Committee passed a bipartisan, comprehensive energy bill. I commend Chairwoman MURKOWSKI for her tireless efforts and Senator CANTWELL for her introduction today of the Energy bill—a bill I am a sponsor of—which sets a bar on comprehensive energy policy reform that would aggressively move our country forward in addressing climate change. Both of these pieces of legislation include the bill I have with Senator HOEVEN, the Nonprofit Energy Efficiency Act, which would allow the nonprofit community to save energy and money through a retrofit program.

During my time in the Senate, I have worked to find innovative solutions that move us forward. One example is this bill. Our bill empowers the nonprofit and faith communities to make energy efficiency improvements. It would help both our environment and our local communities by ensuring nonprofit organizations can benefit from policies that promote greater energy savings and efficiencies.

Whether feeding the hungry, helping the sick, or mentoring youth, my State's nearly 7,000 nonprofit organizations work hard every day to make a difference in people's lives. Nonprofit organizations are at the heart of our country and serve millions of Americans every day. Houses of worship, hospitals, schools, youth centers, and other not-for-profit entities provide critical services and assistance to communities across the country, but like businesses they must count their pennies and operate on a budget. Right now, nonprofit organizations—which, by the way, are often in very old buildings, including churches, synagogues, mosques—cannot benefit from any of the energy efficiency programs available to regular businesses because these programs are provided in the form of tax credits, and because nonprofits are tax exempt they can't get these credits. That often leaves nonprofits with a difficult choice. They can either invest in energy efficiency projects or they can dedicate their very scarce resources to providing valuable resources to the community, but we know investing in energy efficiency improvements today can lead to savings over time that go beyond the cost of the initial investment. So our nonprofits find themselves asking this question: Should we help fewer people for a year or two in order to replace our heating system and then use the long-term savings to serve our community well into the future? That is not a choice they should have to make.

Our bill provides $10 million each year for the next 5 years to create a pilot program at the U.S. Department of Energy that would help local nonprofit organizations make their buildings more energy efficient. The grants would promote energy efficiency in savings by helping to upgrade and retrofit old buildings as well as installing renewable energy generators and heaters. We worked to ensure that the grants will achieve a significant amount of energy savings and are done in a cost-effective manner. The grants would require a 50-percent match so that there is complete buy-in from nonprofits. This will be especially valuable to the many nonprofit organizations that work from older, less energy-efficient buildings.

We are taking a fiscally responsible approach. Our amendment is fully offset. We have support from both sides of the aisle with not just Senator HOEVEN and myself but Senators STABENOW, RISCH, SCHATZ, BLUNT, MIKULSKI, WHITEHOUSE, and UDALL. I am proud to say we have the support of many religious organizations and nonprofits, including the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops that has been a leading supporter of our efforts. They say the bill would enable them to reduce their operating costs, lessen impact on their environment, and bolster America's energy independence.

The bill is now part of both the Energy Policy Modernization Act that recently passed in a bipartisan manner out of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and it is also part of the bill Senator CANTWELL introduced this morning. Although Senators may differ on the specific details of these two energy plans, I believe we can find broad agreement that energy efficiency must be a part of any energy plan. Energy efficiency is an issue we should be able to find common ground on. It is good for the economy, good for consumers, and good for the environment.

I urge my fellow Senators to work together to keep taking real steps forward on meaningful energy legislation that does something about climate change.

As we prepare to welcome Pope Francis to this Congress, it is time to pass legislation that will help nonprofits continue to serve our communities and conserve our natural resources for generations to come.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, I rise to reiterate the importance of providing necessary resources to our men and women in uniform.

We are rapidly approaching the end of the fiscal year, and there are many major issues awaiting thoughtful consideration and action by Congress. There is one item on our to-do list that should have already been checked off; that is, fully funding our national security. That is why I am very disappointed that once again efforts to advance the Department of Defense Appropriations Act were halted today by my friends on the other side of the aisle.

Congress's first priority is, and should be, the defense of our Nation. We should not be hindered by political games in meeting that core duty that we have. The world is a dangerous place. It is not getting any safer. We cannot afford to be complacent about these threats. Our Nation faces challenges from nation states and asymmetric threats. These threats span the globe.

In Asia, Chinese behavior in the South China Sea threatens the longstanding freedom of navigation and our ability to operate on the high seas. Continuing China's pattern of increasing antagonism, a senior Chinese admiral recently declared that the entire South China Sea belongs to China. China's increasing military power, bullying of its neighbors, expansionist policies, and rejection of international norms threatens to upend the stability of that region. Simply put, China's behavior has dramatic consequences for the interests of the United States and our allies. The Asia-Pacific region will continue to grow in importance to the global economy. The ability of our military to operate freely in the Pacific is a key component to our national defense strategy and our economic security. We must vote to provide the necessary resources to address this challenge.

Additionally, the violence in Syria and Iraq continues to grow. This instability has created a vacuum in which terrorist groups like ISIL continue to operate. Its actions threaten the security of the United States and its allies in the region as well as basic human rights and religious freedom.

These challenges are far from the only threats that are facing our Nation. We still have thousands of servicemembers deployed in Afghanistan. What is more, regional conflicts in Yemen and Libya jeopardize U.S. interests. The same is true of the growing number of terrorist groups from the Sinai Peninsula to West Africa.

Congress must ensure that our Nation's military has the necessary resources to protect the United States and to meet our commitments to our allies. As the character of these threats changes between the conventional, the unconventional, and the unknown, failure to appropriate defense resources is a threat in itself to our defense strategy.

As a Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I have heard our Nation's highest military officers repeatedly testify on a wide array of threats to our national security. For example, in his testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee on July 29, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter highlighted the threat that is posed by Iran. Beyond its nuclear program, Iran's support for proxies like Hezbollah and the Assad regime, its hostility toward our ally Israel, and its contribution to the ongoing violence in Yemen—they all present very serious threats to the interests of the United States.

Additionally, referring to the nuclear deal President Obama has signed with Iran, Secretary Carter said the deal places ''no limitations on what the Department of Defense can and will do to pursue our defense strategy in the region''—''no limitations on what the Department of Defense can and will do.''

For the Department of Defense to operate robustly and swiftly and without limitation requires funding of its people, programs, equipment, supplies, and research and development. Yet with an array of dangers facing our Nation, the Commander in Chief of our military has stated he will veto defense spending unless it is accompanied by an increase in nondefense spending.

To be clear, this appropriations bill would provide the President with the funding he asked for in his budget request. A strong bipartisan majority in this body has already voted that we must provide our military men and women with the resources they need to protect this country. In June of this year, the Senate voted 71 to 25 and said we must authorize spending at a level similar to what is contained in the Defense appropriations bill, but when it comes to actually appropriating the necessary resources by stepping up and voting to supply our military servicemembers with the resources they need to accomplish the missions they are given, the minority party objects because they contend that nondefense spending is insufficient.

I fundamentally disagree with this view. All government spending is not created equal. Resources that support our soldiers should not be held up for any reason—least of all in an attempt to increase spending on various objectives that are championed by the EPA or the IRS.

For the first time in 6 years, the Senate Appropriations Committee has sent all 12 appropriations bills to the floor. That is a positive step. That is a good thing, but unfortunately, despite their support in committee, my friends on the other side of the aisle have blocked them on this floor.

So now we find ourselves once again at the brink. Once again, we are veering toward a crisis. We can and we must do better to responsibly govern. That starts with providing for our common defense.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, today Pope Francis arrives in Washington. In 2 days, he will be speaking to a joint meeting of Congress, where he will undoubtedly remind us all to remember what he has termed ''the most abandoned.''

It was Pope Francis who said: ''I invite all of the institutions of the world, the Church, each of us, as one single human family, to give a voice to all of those who suffer silently from hunger, so that this voice becomes a roar which can shake the world.''

He continued and said: ''This campaign [to end hunger] is an invitation to all of us . . . to stop thinking that our daily actions do not have an impact on the lives of those who suffer from hunger firsthand.''

It turns out that the Pope's message on addressing hunger is more timely than we could have imagined. In a moment, I will explain why. It has to do with the government shutdown. Certainly we know from 2 years ago that a government shutdown hurts every family in America, it hurts small businesses across America, it sets the economy back, it creates all sorts of obstructions and frustrations, and it is a self-inflicted wound on America. Yet my colleagues across the aisle are contending that is exactly where they want to head, another showdown over social issues. We have been down this road before. It is a needless self-inflicted wound. We shouldn't be planning to go there.

But here is why the Pope's words on hunger are particularly timely:

Two years ago when we had a government shutdown, it did not impact the program known as SNAP or food stamps—the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or food stamps, as we often refer to it. That is because we still had funds left from the stimulus program to be able to make sure hungry Americans did have the ability to receive the credits on their electronic food stamp card and to purchase groceries for their families. But we are in a different position this time around.

Last Friday the U.S. Department of Agriculture notified the Appropriations Committee that because the stimulus funds that existed 2 years ago are not there any longer, that come October 1, if we shut this government down, then we are also going to be

shutting down food stamps—that is shutting down food stamps for 45 million Americans.

In my home State of Oregon, there are about one out of five Oregonians who depend on food stamps to hold hunger at bay. We are certainly talking about an incredible number of children among that number, so across the country, millions of children, millions more Americans—45 million Americans. Yet here we are saying that it is all right to shut down food stamps and leave millions of Americans with the prospect of going hungry.

It causes me to reflect on Robert Kennedy's effort to take on hunger. He was known back in 1967 to have visited children in Mississippi, and he said the following:

> I have seen children in the Delta area of Mississippi with distended stomachs, whose faces are covered with sores from starvation, and we haven't developed a policy so we can get enough food so that they can live, so that their children, so that their lives are not destroyed. I don't think that's acceptable in the United States of America and I think we need a change.

That is what Robert Kennedy said to our Nation. His advocacy had an impact in two particular areas, and that is that we proceeded to put a lot more resources into fighting hunger and we rewrote the food stamp regulations to provide greater access for those at the lowest income levels. The Food Stamp Program—or as it is now called, SNAP—has become the largest, most effective program in the United States in the fight against hunger.

Again, the USDA contacted us Friday of last week and said it looks like they will have to shut down this program if there is a government shutdown. This did not happen 2 years ago, so this is new information. They said they are going to work through the weekend to see if they can find any way with an existing law to prevent this from happening. As of this morning, they had been unable to find any legal pathway to extend the Food Stamp Program should we be in a government shutdown.

In our country, the poverty threshold for a family of four is about $24,000. For a family of four, that translates to about $6,000 a person. More than half of those who receive food stamps live in families who are below 50 percent of that threshold or roughly $3,000 per year per individual in the family.

In my home State of Oregon, SNAP provides food benefits for about 800,000 residents or, as I mentioned, one in five Oregonians. This will have a widespread impact on hundreds of thousands of individuals in my home State and for my colleagues, hundreds of thousands of individuals in their States—45 million across the country. The USDA tells us that the timing for the recharging of the food stamp cards varies. Not everyone will be affected on October 1, but all of those 45 million would be affected in the month of October. The majority of the SNAP recipients in Oregon and nationwide are vulnerable populations. They are children. They are the disabled. They are the elderly. Can we not come together in a responsible fashion to prevent sending millions of Americans into a crisis over available food, millions of children across our country in a crisis because they do not have food because of our inability to act responsibly?

The words Robert Kennedy used were that this should not happen in America. Let me repeat that certainly I believe this should not happen in America. I cannot conceive of any moral argument that would justify leaving our children, our disabled, our elderly hungry because a few people in this body want to make a political point over a social issue. That is unacceptable.

I do a lot of townhalls back home in Oregon, one in every county every year. I hear from folks who are worried over a lot of issues. They are certainly worried about finding a good job. They are certainly worried about the cost of sending their children to college. They are certainly worried about cuts to Head Start programs and the quality of their public schools. They are worried about the possibility of a secure retirement. And now, because of the threats of partisan point-making here in the body of the Senate, they are going to have to worry about whether they can put dinner on the table and feed their children. That is wrong.

The American people are sick and tired of Congress manufacturing crises like this. Let's move beyond this brinkmanship and this hostage politics. Let's avert this shutdown. Let's carry out the responsibilities to the people of the United States of America.

Pope Francis said in that initial quote I noted that he invited all of the institutions of the world to give voice to all those who suffer silently from hunger. Little did he imagine that on the day he arrived here in Washington, DC, this institution—the U.S. Senate—would be involved not only in not helping those who are hungry but plotting and planning a shutdown of the government that will put millions of Americans into a food crisis. Let's change that. Let's come together. Let's address a responsible plan for carrying the full funding of our government forward.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. PERDUE. Madam President, I want to thank the majority leader for bringing the Defense appropriations bill to the floor for a vote and remind everyone that the Senate Appropriations Committee has put forward 12 appropriations bills that adhere to the Republican budget and that reflect the priorities of the American people.

You have heard all year that we need to get back to regular order, and that means we need to bring up and debate each of these 12 bills individually. It is clear after two votes that the Democratic obstructionism through the Defense appropriations bill will prevent us from funding our service men and women. My colleagues across the aisle are voting against supplying the military with the tools to stop ISIS. They are voting against the much needed upgrades to our missile defense program. They are voting against increasing missile defense support to Israel. They are voting against restoring readiness to our military.

The demands on our military are great. The threats we face today as a nation are numerous, complex, and may be the most dangerous in my lifetime. Those who also volunteer to defend our great Nation against these threats rely on us to meet these obligations as Senators.

Congress is responsible for ensuring that American service men and women have the tools they need to do their jobs and remain safe. But today my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have done our Nation a great disservice. By failing to bring up the Defense appropriations bill, Democrats aren't letting us do our job. That is dangerous.

We need to return to regular order and vote on these appropriations bills so that the priorities of the American people can once and for all be restored.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

INSPECTOR GENERAL VACANCY AT THE VA

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee—headed by Chairman JOHNSON and Ranking Member CARPER—had a very important hearing where we heard from whistleblowers from the VA, and then afterwards we heard from VA officials and representatives from the inspector general's office. The issue of how we treat those who have served the country is so critical to who we are as a nation. Yet, over the last year, we have learned of shocking failures at the Department of Veterans Affairs, and today's testimony, unfortunately, was no different in terms of how whistleblowers were retaliated against at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Instead of a culture that encourages people to come forward when things go wrong, people who come forward when things go wrong are treated badly and also face consequences as far as their employment, and that is wrong.

Over the last year, we have seen shocking failures, including veterans being denied care after being placed on secret wait lists, experiencing extended delays in benefits, and endless wait times for repeals, reviews, or action on claims.

Recently, we also learned that as of last year, the VA had 867,000 pending

health care enrollment records. That is almost 1 million records without a final determination status—some from decades ago. Nearly one-third of the veterans who had applied to the VA for care have now been reported as having died. Additionally, the VA staff has deleted 10,000 transaction records, but the reasons are undocumented. These failures are outrageous, and that word is used a lot around here, but this truly does define what is happening in our VA—outrageous.

Our veterans, who have served and sacrificed so much for our country, deserve the very best care and support we can give them. The VA has fallen short time and time again in meeting that goal.

The bipartisan VA reform bill, enacted last summer, represents an important step in increasing accountability and mismanagement at the department, and also giving our veterans the choice of care in their communities rather than waiting in line. That is very important to my State, New Hampshire, where, unfortunately, we don't have a full-service veterans hospital. There is so much more work to be done on that front; however, we continue to hear about reports of bureaucratic delays and failures at the VA, such as overprescribing opiates, bonuses paid to employees involved in serious misconduct, enrollment record mayhem, and inflated claims of VA employees being held accountable and fired. Unfortunately, we still can't get a number, even after all the wait-list scandals where veterans literally died while waiting for care.

I have a few recent headlines about the VA. In the Chicago Tribune, January 9, ''Veterans: VA hospital nicknamed 'Candy Land' because painkillers given out freely.''

Arizona Republic, February 13, ''Whistle-blowers: VA still endangering suicidal vets.''

Washington Post, March 9, ''Veteran Affairs manager pokes fun at mental health issues with photo of elf begging for Xanax.''

Associated Press, April 9, ''Veterans hospital wait times haven't improved.''

Stars and Stripes, April 13, ''Whistleblowers say retaliation unabated year into VA scandal.''

The Washington Post on May 14, ''Veterans Affairs improperly spent $6 billion annually, senior official says.''

In light of all of the issues that have been raised with our VA, can you imagine that we are in a place where there is no permanent inspector general who has been appointed by the President to serve in that important watchdog position for the Veterans' Administration after all of the issues I just cited in this Chamber? There are many more issues that I didn't even have on this list.

The inspector general position at the Veterans' Administration has been vacant since December of 2013. That is 631 days—631 days that the President has failed to appoint someone to ensure that there is critical oversight and transparency at the Veterans' Administration. In fact, we have just had acting individuals in that position. We have not had a permanent watchdog in that position. In light of everything we have been through, we have had 631 days without adequate accountability; 631 days without permanent oversight leadership; 631 days without a permanent watchdog to investigate scandals that have tarnished the promises we made to our veterans which they earned by defending our great Nation; 631 days without the President even submitting a nomination to fill this empty position. That is unacceptable.

We need the President to step up and appoint an inspector general to be the watchdog for the Veterans' Administration so they can have a continuity of leadership. There is no more important oversight issue right now.

I have written the President, along with Members on both sides of the aisle. We have repeatedly called on the President to make a nomination for this inspector general position, and we know that—through the process—names of individuals who are qualified to serve in this position have actually been submitted to the President's desk. Both sides of the aisle in this body agree on this issue. Our desire—on a bipartisan basis—is to make sure that those who have defended, served, and answered the call of duty for our Nation receive the very best care for what they have done to defend our freedom. Yet, after all the scandals and all the issues and challenges that our veterans face, can you imagine leaving this particular position open for 631 days?

I am, again, in this Chamber going to call on the President, and I know that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, whom I have worked with on this issue, agree that it is time for the President of the United States to nominate a qualified individual—he has had many names submitted to him—to serve in this critical watchdog position as the permanent inspector general for the VA with the full authority to conduct the investigations that need to be conducted on issues that have been raised repeatedly about the Veterans' Administration.

What is clear from the testimony we heard today at the homeland security committee hearing is that we have so much more work to do to ensure accountability at the Veterans' Administration and to ensure that our veterans get the very best of what they deserve and have earned by defending our Nation.

What is clear is that the IG council has done its job and nominated individuals for the President to consider for this inspector general position.

I am now calling on the President: Mr. President, please nominate a qualified individual to be a permanent VA inspector general in order to protect our veterans.

Mr. President, 631 days is already way too long, and our veterans should not have to wait a day longer to have this position filled. This important agency needs a watchdog that is there to serve them.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PUERTO RICO

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today deeply concerned about the growing economic crisis in Puerto Rico, which threatens to destabilize the island, and that we must step in and help our fellow American citizens—but sometimes we forget that the 3.5 million people who live in Puerto Rico are American citizens—before a financial crisis becomes a calamity.

I again urge, as I recently did in a letter to Secretary Lew, along with seven Members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, that the Department of the Treasury move beyond simply providing technical assistance and take a full-throated leadership role to resolve this crisis immediately as we have done in previous financial crises. If we do not act, the result could be a financial disorder that will, at the end of the day, be much more expensive, much more chaotic, and will, in both the long and short term, cost Puerto Rico and the United States.

The fact is that a potential solution rests in the hands of the administration, with Treasury and with HHS. As we said in the letter to Secretary Lew, the world is watching Puerto Rico, and we must ensure that the United States does everything in its power to take strong, bold, and substantive action that stabilizes the situation and protects the 3.5 million American citizens on the island and their families. Technical assistance and advice from Treasury is all well and good, but, in my view, it is just not enough.

Treasury needs to take an active role, and Congress needs to approve the pending debt restructuring legislation I introduced with Senators BLUMENTHAL, SCHUMER, and other Senate colleagues that would allow the government of Puerto Rico to authorize its public utilities to rework their debts under chapter 9. That is in the best interests of both Puerto Rico and the mainland.

The fact of the matter is Puerto Rico would actually be running a surplus—a surplus—if it did not have to make debt payments. Allowing government-owned corporations to restructure their debts using a sound legal process would give the island breathing room to make necessary reforms and would not cost U.S. taxpayers a dime. This could go a long way to promote the fairest and most efficient outcome.

The idea has been endorsed by the editorial boards of the Wall Street

Journal, the Washington Post, Bloomberg View, the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, the Boston Globe, and others. The bill is also supported by the nonpartisan National Bankruptcy Conference and numerous bankruptcy lawyers and judges.

Additionally, it is clear that the island's health care system is adding additional pressure to the overall financial situation, accounting for 20 percent of the island's economy and responsible for a third of its overall debt burden. Sixty percent of Puerto Ricans living on the island are enrolled in Medicare or Medicaid. And because of the disparity in how these two health programs are funded relative to the 50 States, the financial crisis is only exacerbated.

To help alleviate some of this pressure on the health care system, I have introduced the Improving the Treatment of U.S. Territories Under Federal Health Programs Act of 2015 with Senators SCHUMER, NELSON, GILLIBRAND, and BLUMENTHAL. This legislation provides several policies that will ensure Puerto Rico providers, both hospitals and physicians, are treated more equally to the States under the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

Just as importantly, this legislation ensures that beneficiaries on the island are treated equally too. As citizens of the United States, it is imperative that Puerto Ricans be afforded the same access to care, coverage, and health benefits as everyone else.

While I believe this legislation will go a long way toward addressing the island's systemic health care issues, there are several steps that HHS can take immediately and without the need for congressional action. They can change payment calculations under Medicare Advantage and Medicare's inpatient hospital rules to more accurately reflect the costs and demographics on the island. By making necessary adjustments to certain key payment formulas, HHS could make the practice of medicine a financially viable option in Puerto Rico and stem the tide of physicians leaving the island for the U.S. mainland and ensure that our fellow Americans living on the island are able to receive the care they need and deserve. I urge not only Treasury Secretary Lew but HHS Secretary Burwell to do all they can to provide financial and health care-related relief to Puerto Rico to help curb the island's financial crisis.

Now, Governor Garcia Padilla's Working Group for the Fiscal and Economic Recovery of Puerto Rico has also recently released a 5-year plan earlier this month. While I don't agree with everything included in the plan, it shows a determined and legitimate effort to confront the economic crisis facing the island. Unfortunately, the current debt structure and legal restraints threaten the effectiveness of these proposed reforms. Without providing some flexibility and room to maneuver, all the difficult choices in the world won't be able to resolve the crisis.

I wish to make it, however, absolutely clear: I am not—I am not—calling for a Federal bailout of Puerto Rico. But there is still much we can and should do to restore solvency to the island that is home to 3.5 million Americans. Our bond with these Americans who live on the island has always been strong. Our relationship with Puerto Rico is long and deep and extensive. With more than 5 million Puerto Ricans residing in the United States—more than in Puerto Rico itself—we are inextricably tied.

Now, I should not need to remind this body that from the infancy of our Nation, the people of Puerto Rico have been there for us. Now we need to be there for them. Puerto Rico was ceded to the United States in 1898 after the Spanish-American war. Less than two decades later, in 1917, Congress passed the Jones Act, granting American citizenship to residents of the island.

But even long before they were granted U.S. citizenship, Puerto Ricans have had a long and proud history of fighting on the side of America. As far back as 1777, Puerto Rican ports were used by U.S. ships, enabling them to run British blockades and keep commerce flowing, which was so crucial to the war effort. It was Puerto Rican soldiers who took up arms in the U.S. Civil War, defending Washington, DC, from attack and fought in the Battle of Fredericksburg. In World War I, almost 20,000 Puerto Ricans were drafted into the U.S. Armed Forces. Let's not forget about the 65th Infantry Regiment, known as the Borinqueneers, the segregated military unit composed almost entirely of soldiers from Puerto Rico that played a prominent and crucial role in World War I, World War II, and the Korean war, one of the most highly decorated regiments known in military history.

I am proud to say I have worked with Senator BLUMENTHAL and others to make sure that the heroic Borinqueneers, the only Active-Duty segregated Latino military unit in the history of the United States and the last segregated unit to be deactivated, received well-deserved and long-overdue national recognition when we passed a bill last year awarding these courageous patriots with the Congressional Gold Medal—the highest expression of national appreciation for distinguished achievements and contributions to the United States.

It is very easy to point our fingers at our brothers and sisters on the island and fault Puerto Rico for carrying more than $70 billion in debt. But I challenge my Senate colleagues to work with me on finding solutions, to step up to our responsibility at the Federal level by seeking opportunities for Congress and the administration to correct some of the inequities that have contributed to this crisis. I am talking about the unequal Medicare and Medicaid funding that I referenced earlier, the exclusion of Puerto Rico from the Supplemental Security Income program that aids the most vulnerable Americans, the exclusion of Puerto Rico from the child tax credit and earned income tax credit, which encourages low-income individuals to seek employment, and, as previously mentioned, the exclusion of Puerto Rico from chapter 9 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code.

Now, more than ever, we need to be asking in Washington what steps can be taken to manage this crisis. Unequal treatment at the Federal level is, whether we want to own up to it or not, a contributing factor to the current economic crisis. The lack of Federal support has encouraged heavy borrowing by the Puerto Rican government of many, many administrations going back. We must do our part, both in Congress and the administration, to address this crisis, and we must act now, with urgency.

I think the point is clear. As I said, we have a special, historic, unshakeable bond with Puerto Rico, and now is the time to strengthen that bond. The time has come to prevent the worsening fiscal crisis in Puerto Rico. The time has come to help Puerto Rico, and we can do so simply by giving them the wherewithal to help themselves through the Bankruptcy Code, as we would any other similar entity, to have the wherewithal to have an orderly restructuring and to get their economic future back in shape.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, we are on the eve of yet another government shutdown, yet another manufactured crisis. Two years ago it was over defunding the Affordable Care Act. Today Republicans introduced a continuing resolution that holds our country hostage over funding for Planned Parenthood.

The 2013 shutdown of a couple years ago cost billions of dollars in economic losses. We heard many stories of hardships caused by the shutdown, including small business owners who were suffering because our national parks closed, public safety workers protecting our country without pay, and Federal contractors left holding the bag for personnel and program costs. We cannot do this to our working families for the second time in 3 years. We cannot do this to our country.

Instead of funding the government, my colleagues across the aisle are using threats of a shutdown to attack Planned Parenthood without any hard

evidence of wrongdoing by Planned Parenthood. Threatening to shut down the government over an organization that annually provides 400,000 cervical cancer screenings, 500,000 breast exams, and 4.5 million tests and treatments for sexually transmitted diseases is completely uncalled for.

Arguments that there are other providers that can fill the important and critical role of Planned Parenthood are not persuasive. According to the Guttmacher Institute, Planned Parenthood serves more contraceptive clients each year than any other similar provider, including federally qualified health centers. In more than 300 counties across the country, safety net providers such as Planned Parenthood are the providers of choice for nearly half of women. Furthermore, Planned Parenthood is the sole safety net provider in nearly 100 of these counties.

Planned Parenthood services cannot be easily replaced. In an attempt to defund Planned Parenthood, one State submitted a list of providers they said could replace Planned Parenthood's critical women's health care services. This list that the State provided included dentists, ophthalmologists, radiologists, and nursing homes. Think about that. Providers are not widgets.

After a Federal judge called their bluff, the State cut their list from over 2,000 providers to just 29 providers who actually are able to provide primary care services to women. Those 29 providers could not possibly absorb the thousands of patients Planned Parenthood served in that State. Planned Parenthood has long been in the crosshairs of the anti-choice movement.

This recent attack on Planned Parenthood is based on heavily edited videos by radical fringe groups. I refer my colleagues to a letter from Planned Parenthood's Cecile Richards to House and Senate leadership dated August 27, 2015.

Instead of improving the lives of women by passing legislation raising the minimum wage, closing the gender pay gap or ensuring paid leave for all workers, my colleagues across the aisle continue to narrowly focus on ways to further marginalize women. Instead of introducing continuing resolutions that contain these kinds of poison pills, such as defunding Planned Parenthood, we must pass clean legislation that keeps our government funded, that provides needed and critical services to the people of this country. I ask my colleagues to join with me.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF KATHRYN K. MATTHEW TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, Calendar No. 298, Kathryn Matthew; that the Senate vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination; that following the disposition of the nomination, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no interviewing action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Kathryn K. Matthew, of South Carolina, to be Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services for a term of four years.

The Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Kathryn K. Matthew, of South Carolina, to be Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services for a term of four years?

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING TROOPER JOSEPH CAMERON PONDER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to a Kentucky State Police trooper who was tragically lost in the line of duty. Trooper Joseph Cameron Ponder, of Rineyville, was shot and killed while pursuing a suspect on September 13. He was 31 years old.

Cameron Ponder was proud to be a Kentucky State trooper. ''He was eager and he absolutely loved his job,'' is how a State police spokesman described him. He was also new to the job, having just graduated in January of this year from the Kentucky State Police Training Academy. He was stationed at the State police post in Mayfield.

Before becoming a Kentucky State trooper, Cameron served in the U.S. Navy. He enlisted in September 2007, when he was 23 years old, and became a Navy diver. Over the next 6 years he was stationed in places as varied as Great Lakes, IL; Coronado, CA; Panama City, FL; and San Diego, CA.

During his Navy service he received several awards, medals and decorations, including the Combat Action Ribbon, the Good Conduct Medal, the Navy Expeditionary Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Expert Rifle Marksmanship Ribbon and the Expert Pistol Marksmanship Ribbon.

Cameron was discharged from the Navy in July 2013. He was a member of the Church of Christ in Elizabethtown, KY. He was also a dedicated hunter and fisherman who enjoyed the outdoors.

Sadly, Trooper Ponder is the second trooper from the Mayfield post to be killed in the line of duty this year. In June, Trooper Eric K. Chrisman was killed in a vehicle crash. He also had served with the Kentucky State Police for under a year.

Members of Trooper Ponder's family who are suffering from this loss include his father, Joseph Ponder; his mother, Brenda Tiffany, and her husband Allan; his fiancée, Chrystal Coleman; his sister, Kelly Ponder; his brothers, Damon Tiffany and Travis Tiffany; his grandmother, Erika Shook; his niece, Mahlea Starks; and many other family members and friends.

I am proud to share Trooper Ponder's story with my colleagues here in the United States Senate. We're thinking of his family today as well as his fellow officers of the Kentucky State Police. We are praying for the loved ones he has left behind who are feeling this devastating loss.

We are honored by Trooper Ponder's service and his extraordinary sacrifice on behalf of his fellow Kentuckians. I hold the deepest admiration and respect for Trooper Ponder and for every brave police officer across the Bluegrass State. Law enforcement is both an honorable profession and a dangerous one, and Kentucky is grateful they have made a sacred pledge to protect and defend our communities and our lives.

TRIBUTE TO GENERAL MARTIN E. DEMPSEY

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I recognize and pay tribute to GEN Martin E. Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for his lifetime of service to our country. His retirement marks more than 41 years of selfless devotion to our military and our Nation. A leader of exceptional character and consequence, his humility, courage, and expertise will be sorely missed.

A New Jersey native and 1974 graduate of the United States Military Academy, General Dempsey was well prepared to lead our Armed Forces these last 4 years as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. A career armor officer, he has commanded at every level, from platoon leader to combatant commander, and his assignments have carried him and his family across the United States and around the world.

As a company grade officer, he served with the 2nd Cavalry in Europe and the 10th Cavalry at Fort Carson. Following troop command, he earned his masters of arts in English from Duke University and was assigned to the English Department at West Point. He subsequently earned additional advanced degrees from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the National War College.

In 1991, General Dempsey deployed with the 3rd Armored Division in support of Operation Desert Storm. He later commanded a battalion in Germany and then served as the Army's ''senior scout'' as the 67th colonel of the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment—the Brave Rifles—before reporting to the joint staff as an assistant deputy director in the J–5 and later as a special assistant to the 14th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In 2003, General Dempsey commanded the 1st Armored Division in Baghdad and returned to Iraq in 2005 as the commanding general of the Multi-National Security Transition Command—Iraq. From 2007 to 2008, he was the deputy commander and then acting commander of U.S. Central Command, and from 2008 to 2011, he commanded U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command.

Appointed to serve as the Army's 37th Chief of Staff, General Dempsey led his beloved Army a short 149 days before being tapped to serve as the 18th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In that capacity and as the Nation's highest-ranking military officer, he has served as the principal military adviser to the President, the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council, and this Congress these past 4 years.

General Dempsey's exceptional ability to coordinate and build consensus among the office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the services, and the combatant commands has served us well and ensured those charged with civilian oversight of the military have received the best military advice possible to achieve our national objectives. Additionally, he has built trust and strengthened relations with both national and foreign leaders.

During a period of complex and rapid global change, coupled with the military's exceptionally high operational tempo and unprecedented fiscal challenges, General Dempsey's decisive leadership enabled the success of military operations around the world. He masterfully guided the Joint Force to extraordinary execution of global responsibilities, from counterterrorism and crisis response, to supporting our allies, building partner capacity, and humanitarian assistance. His efforts strengthened key alliances, bolstered new partnerships, and more closely integrated the military with the other instruments of our national power against the many threats we face.

Because of those many threats, General Dempsey's tenure as Chairman has been marked by significant transitions in military operations and personnel. His exemplary stewardship helped reset our forces after the conclusion of major combat operations and has prepared them for an increasingly dynamic and unpredictable security environment.

His leadership was critical during the transition of authority to the Afghan National Security Forces following Operation Enduring Freedom. Additionally, in the fight against ISIL, his expert advice helped formulate the military component of a sustainable counter-ISIL strategy. He also guided the military's work as part of the U.S. interagency response to the Ebola virus epidemic in West Africa.

He guided the Joint Force to capitalize on the lessons learned over these past 14 years fighting as a Joint team, undertaking reforms that have driven ''jointness'' further into our military's capability development and operational planning. In addition, recognizing the shifting nature of the security environment and our ability to respond to it, General Dempsey led a paradigm shift in how we posture and employ this Joint team around the world.

At the same time, the past few years have witnessed exponential growth of the cyber threat against our Nation, and, in response, General Dempsey has deftly pushed the expansion of our cyber capabilities. He has pressed hard for cyber legislation, championed the rapid development of our cyber forces, and implemented the Joint Information Environment to optimize and better defend our military's information technology infrastructure. These initiatives will be critical to the future security of our Nation.

As principal steward of the military profession, he renewed an internal commitment to strengthen the profession of arms and reinvigorated education, training, and leader development. He managed historic decisions, including reforms to general and flag officer ethics, Department-wide improvements in sexual assault prevention and response, expansion of service opportunities for women, and the extension of benefits to same-sex spouses of uniformed servicemembers and Department of Defense civilian employees. His stewardship set conditions to preserve the strength of the all-volunteer force and to ensure servicemembers departing the military are successfully reintegrated back into their communities.

As he retires, General Dempsey should take great pride in his role in ensuring our military remains the best supported, best trained, best equipped, and best led force on the planet. His contributions to our national security are a testament to his remarkable leadership and selfless dedication. During trying times, under sometimes harsh scrutiny and with high national security stakes at hand, his steadfast commitment to the readiness and welfare of Joint Force servicemembers and their families, as well as his exceptional support for commanders and their warfighting requirements, made significant and lasting contributions to our Nation.

With over four decades of exemplary service to our Nation, General Dempsey and his family deserve our most heartfelt gratitude and admiration. He and Deanie have my very best wishes for a long, happy, and well-deserved retirement. Our Nation, our Joint Force, and our Army are all better for his leadership and distinguished service.

OBSERVING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VIETNAM WAR

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, on the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam war, we reflect with reverence upon a generation that served with honor, distinction, and selflessness. We pay tribute to the 9 million men and women who wore our Nation's uniform during the Vietnam era, answered our Nation's call to service, and advanced the sacred ideals of liberty and self-determination.

All gave some, and some gave all. Currently, the names of the more than 58,000 patriots who gave their all are forever etched in black granite on the Vietnam Memorial in our Nation's Capital. The names of the nearly 1,800 Americans who remain unaccounted for are forever etched in our hearts.

Nearly 350 patriots from Maine are listed among the killed or missing. Among those names is U.S. Army SGT Donald Skidgel, a Medal of Honor recipient, born in my hometown of Caribou, ME, who served in Vietnam and who gave his life saving the lives of others. On September 14 of this year, Navy pilot LT Neil Taylor was finally laid to rest in his hometown of Rangeley, ME, 50 years to the day after his aircraft was shot down on his 68th mission and he was reported missing. They were patriots in the best American tradition. We will never forget them.

May the families of those who fell and of those unaccounted for find peace in knowing that the American people share their loss and grief. We will always be grateful for the valor and sacrifice of their loved ones. And we will never forget them.

From the founding of our Nation to today, the freedom we hold sacred has been earned by our fellow citizens. Our Nation's history has been written by the men and women who serve, despite the sacrifices, with courage and devotion. The men and women of the Vietnam era carried on that tradition.

They carry on another tradition that echoes throughout our history: After their military service was done, they returned home, quietly and modestly, and continued to serve their communities.

The American people believe that supporting our troops doesn't stop once they leave the military. Just as no member of our Armed Forces would leave a comrade behind on the battlefield, we must not leave our veterans and their families behind on the battlefields of injury and disease. We must be strong advocates for veterans' health care and be concerned about the Vietnam veterans who were exposed to agent orange. We must remain committed to ensuring that those veterans and their families receive the care and support they have earned.

The men and women who served our Nation a half century ago upheld the highest ideals of America and of the American Armed Forces. Our Vietnam veterans were then, and remain today, heroes who deserve our respect and our gratitude.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, this month marks the 50th anniversary of the introduction of U.S. ground troops in the Vietnam war, and I would like to recognize our Vietnam era veterans who dedicated their strength and service to defend freedom and democracy across the globe. In honor of this anniversary, the Secretary of Defense coordinated various events to thank and honor all veterans of the Vietnam war. A well-deserved welcome home ceremony will be held in Presque Isle, ME, on September 26, 2015, to recognize and commemorate the lives of those who fought so bravely.

For nearly 20 years, the Vietnam war occupied the American collective conscience. American involvement initially focused on assisting French forces to counter the Vietminh communist revolution. However, in 1964 the Gulf of Tonkin incident dramatically shifted American perspective, and on August 7, President Johnson drafted and Congress unanimously approved a resolution authorizing direct military intervention in Vietnam.

Throughout the war, the United States deployed over 2.7 million servicemembers to Vietnam, and over 8 million Americans served in uniform during the Vietnam era. More than 58,200 Americans lost their lives and more than 150,000 were seriously wounded during the conflict. I would like to honor those brave Americans who sacrificed so much for their country. Their contributions to our Nation will never be forgotten.

Maine played a crucial role in the war effort. With one of the highest percentages of veterans per capita in the nation, the Vietnam war's legacy still resonates in Maine today. Close to 48,000 people from Maine served in Vietnam, and nearly 350 Maine servicemembers were killed or went missing in action during the war. Our veterans' unwavering patriotism, courage, and resilience fully demonstrate the fortitude of American character and our Nation's commitment to democracy worldwide.

On this 50th anniversary of the Vietnam war, I would like to join the Secretary of Defense in recognizing the brave Americans who served overseas, as well as those on the homefront whose unrelenting support was invaluable to those overseas. Our veterans have made countless personal sacrifices in protection of our freedoms, and I am proud to honor and thank them for their service to our great Nation.

BEING A TOLERANT AND ACCEPTING COUNTRY

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, in recent weeks two of the leading contenders to be President of the United States called into question the devotion of American Muslims to this great country, and one even outrageously suggested that being Muslim precludes you from being President. I denounce this. It is in violation of Article VI of the Constitution and in violation of our County's basic principles.

Everyone that serves in public office from President to the Senate must uphold the Constitution. Article VI of the Constitution explicitly states:

> All debts contracted and engagements entered into, before the adoption of this Constitution, shall be as valid against the United States under this Constitution, as under the Confederation.
>
> This Constitution, and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof; and all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding.
>
> The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the members of the several state legislatures, and all executive and judicial officers, both of the United States and of the several states, shall be bound by oath or affirmation, to support this Constitution; but no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.

There are 3 million American Muslims in our country. They teach in our schools, they work in our hospitals, and they attend our universities. Their children play on the same playgrounds and go to the same schools. They are able to do this because one of our founding principles on which our country was established was freedom of religion. It is on that basis that the United States should strive to be a tolerant and accepting country where differences are understood and diversity is celebrated. This is not the America some leading candidates for President imagine. They are perpetuating an undercurrent of bigotry by suggesting that American Muslims can't be President because of their religious beliefs. Not only is this contrary to our American values, it defies the U.S. Constitution.

TRIBUTE TO MARY BEHRENS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, the Wyoming Nurses Association is honoring Casper nurse practitioner Mary Behrens with the 2015 Lifetime Achievement award. I am delighted to congratulate Mary on this tremendous honor.

Following in the footsteps of her mother, Mary pursued her passion for service by completing her RN at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1964. She practiced as a nurse in Madison while her husband Jerry finished his medical degree and residency. She remained in Madison as Jerry served our Nation as a physician treating wounded soldiers in Vietnam. In 1973, the couple moved to Casper, WY. Folks in Wyoming are fortunate that Mary chose to dedicate her career helping others in our State. She is truly an innovator, leader, and mentor for many nurses in Wyoming across the Nation and around the world.

The list of Mary's accomplishments and awards is long. She was active on the American Nurses Association board and is a board member of the University of Wyoming's Friends of the Fay W. Whitney School of Nursing. She is one of only three Wyoming nurses to be nationally recognized as a fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners, FAANP. Her leadership in this area is incredible.

In 2005 she was a member of the American delegation to the World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, where she testified on the national nursing shortage. In addition, through her involvement with the Friendship Bridge program, Mary is credited with helping to establish an education pathway for nurses in Vietnam. Her efforts to develop a modern baccalaureate curriculum have had a tremendous impact on the global scope of nursing, particularly in Vietnam and neighboring countries.

Mary's civic service is not at all limited to her profession. In fact, she has an established history as a public servant for both Casper and Wyoming. Mary served on the Casper city council and as mayor of Casper. She was also a Natrona county commissioner and a representative in the Wyoming State Legislature. This experience, and her intense desire to make change, has made a profound impact on our State. Mary's extensive activity in shaping public policy truly stands alone, as few people possess such a wide breadth of policy knowledge, leadership skills, and passion for the nursing profession.

It is fitting that the Wyoming Nurses Association is honoring Mary Behrens with their most prestigious award. Countless patients and nursing students have benefitted from her leadership and care. The nursing profession is stronger because of Mary's enthusiastic advocacy.

Please join me in thanking Mary Behrens for her lifetime investment in nursing. Bobbi and I are truly fortunate to call her our friend.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO TERRY BOSTON

• Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I would like to take this moment for the Congress to note and honor the work of Terry Boston, president and CEO of PJM Interconnection, LLC.

It is most fitting that Terry Boston be recognized in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, for he has served countless Americans and played a key role in ensuring adequate infrastructure to drive America's economic development and our citizens' well-being throughout his professional life.

Since 2008, Terry Boston has served as president and chief executive officer of PJM located in Valley Forge, PA. In this role, Terry oversees the largest power grid in North America and the largest electricity market in the world. Terry also is president of the Association of Edison Illuminating Companies, Inc., and immediate past president of the GO 15, the association of the world's largest power grid operators. Terry was recently elected to the National Academy of Engineering, one of the highest professional honors accorded an engineer. He is a member of the Board for the Electric Power Research Institute.

Terry Boston is past chair of the North American Transmission Forum, dedicated to excellence in performance and sharing industry best practices. He also was one of the eight industry experts selected to direct the North American Reliability Corporation investigation of the August 2003 Northeast/Midwest blackout.

Prior to joining PJM, Terry Boston was the executive vice president of the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Nation's largest public power provider. In his 35 years at TVA, Terry directed divisions in transmission and power operations, pricing, contracts and electric system reliability.

PJM employs over 600 people in Pennsylvania and performs a critical function by ''keeping the lights on'' 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. PJM helps to ensure the health and well-being of our citizens not just in my State but for over 51 million persons in all or portions of the States of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and the District of Columbia.

Mr. President, Terry Boston has been an excellent engineer and an inspirational leader in the electric industry. As he retires from PJM, I ask that you join me and the entire Senate in wishing Terry success in his future endeavors.•

REMEMBERING BILLY ROSS BROWN

• Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, the agriculture community and the State of Mississippi suffered a great loss with the passing of Billy Ross Brown, Jr., on Saturday, September 12, 2015. He was a good friend, a neighbor, a highly respected member of his community, and a gentleman who dedicated much of his life to helping Mississippi farmers and improving the overall quality of life in rural America.

A native of Oxford, MS, Billy Ross faithfully served the Farm Credit System and U.S. agricultural interests for over 36 years. In 1990 Billy Ross was appointed by President George H. W. Bush to serve on the Farm Credit Administration Board, and in 1993 he was designated Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Board by President Clinton, where he served with distinction until October of 1994. Following his tenure in Washington, Billy Ross returned to Mississippi and was nominated to the First South Farm Credit Board of Directors, a position in which he served until his retirement in March 2005.

In addition to his contributions to the U.S. Farm Credit System, Billy Ross was active in various agriculture and conservation organizations. He served more than 20 years as area vice president for the Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts and more than 30 years as a commissioner of the Lafayette County Soil and Water Conservation District. Billy Ross also served on the Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission as well as the U.S. Forest Service National Advisory Committee. He received many awards for his work in agriculture, conservation, forestry and wildlife habitat.

Billy Ross was a true gentleman who illustrated dedication to his community and country. I am grateful for his friendship and all he accomplished for American agriculture. My thoughts and prayers are with his wife Lynn and the entire Brown family during this sad time.•

TRIBUTE TO MARGO WALSH

• Mr. KING. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Margo Walsh, founder of MaineWorks, for her outstanding leadership and dedication to the State of Maine.

Under Margo's leadership, MaineWorks is strengthening communities and developing infrastructure across our State by providing temporary employment in the industrial construction sector to vulnerable laborers seeking to re-enter the workforce. Margo's vision has grown MaineWorks into an inclusive and empowering community for recent immigrants, low-income laborers, past nonviolent offenders, military veterans, and other Mainers recovering from substance abuse.

Margo holds a BA in Psychology from Wheaton College and spent over 10 years in New York City as a recruiter for Goldman Sachs's Investment Banking Division and as an international human resources consultant at Hewitt. She subsequently returned to her home State of Maine, determined to channel her passion for economic and social development towards the common good.

Margo's accomplishments at MaineWorks, however, extend beyond her initial decision to found the company in 2010. Under her continued leadership, MaineWorks has received recognition across the State and nationwide. In 2014 and 2015, SCORE recognized MaineWorks as the most successful innovative business in the State of Maine, and in 2014, MaineBiz Magazine named Margo as one of five women to watch. Additionally, MaineWorks is featured on the Federal Minimum Wage Campaign's video and was recently certified as a B-corporation, a testament to the company's commitment to transparency, social development, and environmental sustainability.

I would like to recognize and thank Margo for her ongoing commitment to the State of Maine. Our State owes Margo a great deal for her vision, leadership, compassion, and commitment to Maine's social and economic development. I look forward to Margo's continued service to MaineWorks and to the entire State of Maine.•

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bills were read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 3134. An act to provide for a moratorium on Federal funding to Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc.

H.R. 3504. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit a health care practitioner from failing to exercise the proper degree of care in the case of a child who survives an abortion or attempted abortion.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. THUNE, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

H.R. 34. An act to authorize and strengthen the tsunami detection, forecast, warning, research, and mitigation program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–146).

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. McCain for the Committee on Armed Services.

Army nomination of Brig. Gen. Barbara R. Holcomb, to be Major General.

Air Force nomination of Maj. Gen. Jack Weinstein, to be Lieutenant General.

Air Force nomination of Col. Michael E. Flanagan, to be Brigadier General.

Air Force nomination of Col. David W. Silva II, to be Brigadier General.

Air Force nomination of Col. Philip R. Sheridan, to be Brigadier General.

Air Force nomination of Col. Timothy J. LaBarge, to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Col. Kristan L. K. Hericks, to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Brig. Gen. Jody J. Daniels, to be Major General.

Navy nomination of Vice Adm. Frank C. Pandolfe, to be Vice Admiral.

Navy nomination of Rear Adm. Raquel C. Bono, to be Vice Admiral.

Navy nomination of Rear Adm. David C. Johnson, to be Vice Admiral.

Marine Corps nomination of Lt. Gen. Kenneth F. McKenzie, Jr., to be Lieutenant General.

Marine Corps nomination of Maj. Gen. William D. Beydler, to be Lieutenant General.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, for the Committee on Armed Services I report favorably the following nomination lists which were printed in the RECORDs on the dates indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that these nominations lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Air Force nomination of Kyle J. Weld, to be Colonel.

Air Force nominations beginning with Kathleen E. Akers and ending with Saiprasad M. Zemse, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 9, 2015.

Air Force nominations beginning with Paul R. Brezinski and ending with Thomas E. Williford, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 9, 2015.

Air Force nominations beginning with Dwayne A. Baca and ending with Liana Lucas Vogel, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 9, 2015.

Air Force nominations beginning with Reni B. Angelova and ending with Grant W. Wisner, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 9, 2015.

Air Force nominations beginning with David R. Alaniz and ending with Devon L. Wentz, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 9, 2015.

Air Force nomination of John M. Gooch, to be Colonel.

Air Force nomination of Herman W. Dykes, Jr., to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with Jonathan S. Ackiss and ending with D012659, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 8, 2015.

Army nominations beginning with Michael H. Adorjan and ending with G010310, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 8, 2015.

Army nominations beginning with Matthew T. Adamczyk and ending with D012593, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 8, 2015.

Army nomination of Gregory I. Kelts, to be Major.

Army nominations beginning with Stephen H. Cooper and ending with David G. Wortman, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 8, 2015.

Army nomination of Lesley A. Watts, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Kirby R. Gross, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Franchesca M. Desriviere, to be Major.

Army nomination of Jerry L. Tolbert, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Christopher R. Forsythe, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Francis G. Maresco, Jr., to be Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with David S. Abrahams and ending with D012627, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 16, 2015.

Army nominations beginning with Stephanie R. Ahern and ending with G010384, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 16, 2015.

Army nominations beginning with Christopher W. Abbott and ending with D011026, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 16, 2015.

Army nomination of Neil I. Nelson, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Benjamin J. Bigelow, to be Colonel.

Navy nominations beginning with Enrique R. Asuncion and ending with Timothy J. Saxon, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 8, 2015.

Navy nominations beginning with Christian J. Auger and ending with Chester J. Wyckoff, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 8, 2015.

Navy nominations beginning with Cara M. Addison and ending with Joel A. White, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 8, 2015.

Navy nominations beginning with Oluwafadekemi N. Adewetan and ending with Justin I. Watson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 8, 2015.

Navy nominations beginning with Frederic Albesa and ending with Franz J. Yu, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 8, 2015.

Navy nominations beginning with Maricar S. Aberin and ending with Cardia M. Wilson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 8, 2015.

Navy nominations beginning with James P. Adwell and ending with Maresa C.J. Zenner, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 8, 2015.

Navy nominations beginning with Richard R. Abitria and ending with David J. Zelinskas, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 8, 2015.

Navy nomination of Michelle D. Carter, to be Captain.

Navy nomination of Regine Reimers, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nomination of Joel V. Finny, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nomination of Ernest C. Lee, to be Captain.

Navy nomination of Natalia C. Henriquez, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nominations beginning with Whitney A. Abraham and ending with Bethany R. Zmitrovich, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 16, 2015.

Navy nominations beginning with Rebecca K. Adams and ending with Michael L. Zuehlke, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 16, 2015.

Navy nominations beginning with Christopher M. Bade and ending with Cassandra M. Sisti, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 16, 2015.

Navy nominations beginning with Jamie P. Drage and ending with Richard M. Yates, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 16, 2015.

Navy nominations beginning with Jason M. Bauman and ending with Mark A. Williams, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 16, 2015.

Navy nominations beginning with Joshua A. Aisen and ending with Scott M. Thornbury, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 16, 2015.

Navy nominations beginning with Richard S. Chernitzer and ending with Beth A. Teach, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 16, 2015.

Navy nominations beginning with Nicholas A. Denison and ending with Theodore J. Stow, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 16, 2015.

Navy nominations beginning with Travis C. Adams and ending with Antonio Zubia, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 16, 2015.

Navy nominations beginning with Michael K. Allen and ending with Jerry W. Wyrick II, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 16, 2015.

Navy nominations beginning with Brielle L. Adamovich and ending with Richard S. Ziba, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 16, 2015.

Navy nominations beginning with Gilbert R. Baughn and ending with Sergio B. Wooden, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 16, 2015.

Navy nomination of Gregory A. Grubbs, to be Lieutenant Commander.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. UDALL (for himself, Mr. HEINRICH, and Mr. BENNET):

S. 2063. A bill to provide compensation to injured persons relating to the Gold King Mine spill, to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to address mining-related issues, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. KAINE):

S. 2064. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to expand the definition of eligible program; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mr. CASEY, Mr. REED, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 2065. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to increase the income protection allowances; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SASSE (for himself, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. COATS, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. DAINES, Mrs. ERNST, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY,

Mr. INHOFE, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. MORAN, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. ENZI, and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 2066. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit a health care practitioner from failing to exercise the proper degree of care in the case of a child who survives an abortion or attempted abortion; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. KING, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. 2067. A bill to establish EUREKA Prize Competitions to accelerate discovery and development of disease-modifying, preventive, or curative treatments for Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, to encourage efforts to enhance detection and diagnosis of such diseases, or to enhance the quality and efficiency of care of individuals with such diseases; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. CARPER):

S. 2068. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to include automated fire sprinkler system retrofits as section 179 property and classify certain automated fire sprinkler system retrofits as 15-year property for purposes of depreciation; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 2069. A bill to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to modify provisions relating to certain land exchanges in the Mt. Hood Wilderness in the State of Oregon; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. AYOTTE:

S. 2070. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself and Mr. COTTON):

S. Res. 261. A resolution designating the week of October 11 through October 17, 2015, as ''National Case Management Week'' to recognize the role of case management in improving health care outcomes for patients; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. AYOTTE (for herself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mrs. FISCHER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mrs. ERNST, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. CANTWELL, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. Res. 262. A resolution to support the empowerment of women and urge countries to #FreeThe20; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. WYDEN, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. Res. 263. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Retirement Security Week, including raising public awareness of the various tax-preferred retirement vehicles, increasing personal financial literacy, and engaging the people of the United States on the keys to success in achieving and maintaining retirement security throughout their lifetimes; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mrs. MCCASKILL):

S. Res. 264. A resolution designating September 23, 2015, as ''National Falls Prevention Awareness Day'' to raise awareness and encourage the prevention of falls among older adults; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. Res. 265. A resolution honoring the life, accomplishments, and legacy of Congressman Louis Stokes; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. HATCH):

S. Res. 266. A resolution designating September 2015 at ''National Kinship Care Month''; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 108

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 108, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve access for students to Federal grants and loans to help pay for postsecondary, graduate, and professional educational opportunities, and for other purposes.

S. 238

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 238, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to authorize the Director of the Bureau of Prisons to issue oleoresin capsicum spray to officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons.

S. 314

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) and the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) were added as cosponsors of S. 314, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage under the Medicare program of pharmacist services.

S. 423

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 423, a bill to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to provide an exception to the annual written privacy notice requirement.

S. 553

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 553, a bill to marshal resources to undertake a concerted, transformative effort that seeks to bring an end to modern slavery, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 553, supra.

S. 569

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 569, a bill to reauthorize the farm to school program, and for other purposes.

S. 637

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 637, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend and modify the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 697

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) were added as cosponsors of S. 697, a bill to amend the Toxic Substances Control Act to reauthorize and modernize that Act, and for other purposes.

S. 968

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 968, a bill to require the Commissioner of Social Security to revise the medical and evaluation criteria for determining disability in a person diagnosed with Huntington's Disease and to waive the 24-month waiting period for Medicare eligibility for individuals disabled by Huntington's Disease.

S. 1082

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1082, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the removal or demotion of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs based on performance or misconduct, and for other purposes.

S. 1140

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1140, a bill to require the Secretary of the Army and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to propose a regulation revising the definition of the term ''waters of the United States'', and for other purposes.

S. 1170

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1170, a bill to amend title 39, United States Code, to extend the authority of the United States Postal Service to issue a semipostal to raise funds for breast cancer research, and for other purposes.

S. 1252

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1252, a bill to authorize a comprehensive strategic approach for United States foreign assistance to developing countries to reduce global poverty and hunger, achieve food and nutrition security, promote inclusive, sustainable, agricultural-led economic growth, improve nutritional outcomes, especially for women and children, build resilience among vulnerable populations, and for other purposes.

S. 1261

At the request of Mr. MANCHIN, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1261, a bill to ensure that methods of collecting taxes and fees by private citizens on behalf of State and local governments are fair and effective and do not discriminate against interstate commerce for wireless telecommunications.

S. 1287

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1287, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to revise and extend the program for viral hepatitis surveillance, education, and testing in order to prevent deaths from chronic liver disease and liver cancer, and for other purposes.

S. 1493

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1493, a bill to provide for an increase, effective December 1, 2015, in the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. VITTER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1493, supra.

S. 1555

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1555, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Filipino veterans of World War II, in recognition of the dedicated service of the veterans during World War II.

S. 1559

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) and the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 1559, a bill to protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence from emotional and psychological trauma caused by acts of violence or threats of violence against their pets.

S. 1562

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1562, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform taxation of alcoholic beverages.

S. 1667

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1667, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify the special rules for accident and health plans of certain governmental entities, and for other purposes.

S. 1682

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1682, a bill to extend the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 and to require the Secretary of the Treasury to report on the use by Iran of funds made available through sanctions relief.

S. 1766

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1766, a bill to direct the Secretary of Defense to review the discharge characterization of former members of the Armed Forces who were discharged by reason of the sexual orientation of the member, and for other purposes.

S. 1798

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1798, a bill to reauthorize the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, and for other purposes.

S. 1830

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1830, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the coverage of marriage and family therapist services and mental health counselor services under part B of the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 1831

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1831, a bill to revise section 48 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes.

S. 1893

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1893, a bill to reauthorize and improve programs related to mental health and substance use disorders.

S. 1911

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1911, a bill to implement policies to end preventable maternal, newborn, and child deaths globally.

S. 1982

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1982, a bill to authorize a Wall of Remembrance as part of the Korean War Veterans Memorial and to allow certain private contributions to fund the Wall of Remembrance.

S. 2028

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2028, a bill to amend the Federal Credit Union Act, to advance the ability of credit unions to promote small business growth and economic development opportunities, and for other purposes.

S. 2034

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2034, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide additional aggravating factors for the imposition of the death penalty based on the status of the victim.

S. 2061

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2061, a bill to designate a National Memorial to Fallen Educators at the National Teachers Hall of Fame in Emporia, Kansas.

AMENDMENT NO. 2667

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2667 intended to be proposed to H.R. 36, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to protect pain-capable unborn children, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. WICKER (for himself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. KING, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. 2067. A bill to establish EUREKA Prize Competitions to accelerate discovery and development of disease-modifying, preventive, or curative treatments for Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, to encourage efforts to enhance detection and diagnosis of such diseases, or to enhance the quality and efficiency of care of individuals with such diseases; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I am wearing purple today in honor of World Alzheimer's Month. As a matter of fact, yesterday, September 21, was World Alzheimer's Day. So I have chosen today to introduce a bill that I hope will lead to a major breakthrough in fighting this terrible disease and treating and potentially curing Alzheimer's disease.

The legislation which I introduced this morning is called the EUREKA Act, which stands for Ensuring Useful Research Expenditures is Key for Alzheimer's—EUREKA.

I am taking this moment to briefly discuss the problem of Alzheimer's and to ask my colleagues to get behind this tripartisan legislation and see if we can create some momentum to cure Alzheimer's disease in a decade.

First of all, a little bit about awareness. As we all know, Alzheimer's is a 100-percent fatal disease. It affects some 36 million people around the

globe. More than 5 million Americans currently have Alzheimer's disease. My mother died of Alzheimer's disease. I can tell you it is an incredibly personal trial for families who deal with loved ones suffering and ultimately succumbing to this disease. So there is the human cost which so many of us have experienced and are experiencing.

There is also the cost in dollars and cents. Americans will spend $226 billion from our Treasury on Alzheimer's this year alone. The disease puts an extraordinary burden on Medicare and Medicaid. As a matter of fact, one in five Medicare dollars will be spent this year on someone with Alzheimer's. Think of what we could do to alleviate the suffering our previous speaker was talking about if we didn't have to spend this $226 billion per year, if we didn't have to spend one in five of our Medicare dollars on someone with Alzheimer's. Consider the 2013 filing from the Rand Corporation. Direct costs of Alzheimer's exceed similar costs associated with cancer and heart disease combined.

According to Rush University, Alzheimer's is responsible for more than 500,000 deaths each year.

Without a cure or a way to halt this disease, these numbers will continue to grow. By 2050 Alzheimer's is expected to cost $1.1 trillion per year. By then, Medicare and Medicaid could see a 500-percent increase in Alzheimer's spending. So we have a problem in terms of dollars and cents, and we certainly have a problem in terms of the hardship it causes on families today.

Experts say we need $2 billion a year in public research if we are going to get to this goal of conquering Alzheimer's by 2025. We do the best we can at the National Institutes of Health, but we spend only $586 million a year on Alzheimer's research. We need $2 billion a year. We spend roughly a quarter of that amount each year, with very little prospect of getting it up to four times what we are spending now.

What is the solution? I believe the solution is to go to a concept that has made America great for decades and even centuries, and that is the American spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship and competition. We create, we build, and we make a difference in people's lives through competition and innovation. So today I have introduced the EUREKA bill, which would establish a national prize for achieving benchmarks in fighting this disease. I want to make it clear that the EUREKA Act would proceed on a parallel track with what is being done at NIH and the Federal Government in terms of research. It wouldn't take a penny away from the research dollars currently spent on Alzheimer's and the funds used to attack Alzheimer's in so many ways. It would be another route for a breakthrough by establishing a competition to run parallel to the research being done.

We will need to research some milestones before we arrive at an Alzheimer's cure. This bill would create a system within the government, with cooperation from NIH, to encourage public and private collaboration to help us establish prizes for milestones reached to conquer Alzheimer's. Of course, we need to remember that prizes are paid only for success. If we don't meet the milestones, we won't have to expend the money.

My excellent staff and I have been working for months with some of the leading experts in the United States on this concept, not the least of which is the XPRIZE Foundation, which has done such a good job in establishing breakthroughs in other areas. So we have the support and cooperation of the XPRIZE Foundation. In addition, we have worked with the National Institutes of Health and the Food and Drug Administration to get as much information as possible, and we think we have come up with a way to have government-funded prizes to conquer this disease.

This is nothing new. The XPRIZE Foundation came along relatively recently, but it was inspired by previous examples of success. In 1927 Charles Lindbergh won $25,000 for his Spirit of St. Louis aircraft in a competition to achieve the first nonstop flight between New York City and Paris. He received a prize for this accomplishment. Today aviation is a $300 billion industry. So prizes are not a new strategy. The government already invests in countless areas, including health. As a matter of fact, the America COMPETES Act gives Federal agencies the authority to conduct prize-based challenges. NIH has already completed dozens of them. This builds on that success.

I envision that a panel would be established under this legislation to set benchmarks that would get us well along the road to conquering Alzheimer's. Successful, prize-worthy events would be measures such as identifying an Alzheimer's biomarker, developing early-detection techniques, or repurposing existing drugs for treatment. Milestones such as these would be established by a panel of experts. Think of what could be achieved if people with expertise combine their skills inside and outside the government to end Alzheimer's. Think of the progress that could be made toward ending human suffering.

My bill is S. 2067, the EUREKA Act, and it has received support from researchers, including the MIND Center at the University of Mississippi in my home State, where we are doing innovative, groundbreaking achievements every day on Alzheimer's. Other organizations supporting the EUREKA Act include the Alzheimer's Association, Us Against Alzheimer's, the XPRIZE Foundation, the Alzheimer's Foundation of America, BrightFocus Foundation, Leaders Engaged on Alzheimer's Disease, otherwise known as LEAD, and Eli Lilly. All of these organizations and companies are supporting EUREKA.

We already have not bipartisan cosponsorship but tripartisan cosponsorship of this legislation because we have Republicans, Democrats, and Independents already cosponsoring this EUREKA Act.

So I come to the floor today and ask my colleagues to talk to their health staff members. Look at this concept. Talk to us about the efforts we are engaged in, about the research we have done, about the learned people who know what they are talking about and who have worked with us to bring this bill where it is. I hope we can create some momentum for this act soon. I hope we can attach it to legislation before the end of the year. I hope we can put this on the President's desk sometime early in the year 2016.

EUREKA can be a game changer in fighting one of the most terrible and horrible and expensive diseases we have. So I would urge my colleagues to look at this, to get back to me. I am going to aggressively be talking to each of my colleagues and asking them to cosponsor this legislation. I think we are onto something. I think we are getting very, very near to achieving this goal of conquering Alzheimer's within a decade.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. CARPER):

S. 2068. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to include automated fire sprinkler system retrofits as section 179 property and classify certain automated fire sprinkler system retrofits as 15-year property for purposes of depreciation; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act. I am very pleased to be joined by my colleague from Delaware, Senator CARPER, in introducing this bipartisan bill.

Our bill would encourage commercial building owners to invest in life-saving fire safety upgrades. While building codes require sprinklers in new commercial buildings, a great number of structures across the U.S. were built and put in service before sprinklers were required. This is of significance in Maine, which has some of the oldest housing stock in the country and which has experienced deadly apartment building fires.

Maine has a large number of older, historic buildings—buildings that generally may not be required to have fire sprinklers. According to the Maine State Housing Authority, Maine has the sixth oldest housing stock in the country. In fact, many of the historic areas of Portland were built following a devastating fire in 1866. This fire destroyed most of Portland's commercial buildings, many of its churches, and countless homes.

Fire sprinklers are very effective at preventing deaths caused by fires. Small business building owners find it difficult, however, to fund adding retrofit sprinklers. Our bill would provide

two tax incentives to encourage building owners to make this investment.

Currently, commercial building owners must depreciate fire sprinkler retrofits over a lengthy 39-year period. The period for residential buildings is 27 and a half years. This bill reclassifies fire sprinkler retrofits as 15-year depreciable property, thus allowing building owners to write off their costs more quickly. The bill also provides an option for certain small businesses to deduct the cost of the fire system upgrades immediately under Section 179 of the tax code. Together, these proposals will provide a strong incentive for building owners to install fire sprinkler systems.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, in 2013, a fire department responded to a structure fire every 65 seconds, and fire claimed 9 lives every day. Just last October, five young adults were killed when fire swept through a two apartment building near the University of Southern Maine. In addition to these five, 20 other people died in fires in Maine in 2014. Just last month, a fire killed two people in Old Town, ME. Sprinklers decrease the fire death rate by about 80 percent and the average loss per home fire by about 70 percent.

This bill was originally drafted in response to the deadly nightclub fire in West Warwick, RI, in 2003. One hundred people died in that fire. The building did not have a fire sprinkler system. Let us work together to prevent another tragedy like this from happening. I invite my colleagues to join Senator CARPER and me in support of this bipartisan, common sense legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a letter of support be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

CONGRESSIONAL FIRE SERVICES INSTITUTE,
September 18, 2015.

Hon. SUSAN COLLINS,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR COLLINS: On behalf of the Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI), I would like to express our thanks and appreciation for sponsoring the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act. In 2002, CFSI's National Advisory Committee (NAC), a coalition of 35 national fire and emergency service organizations, unanimously approved a resolution expressing the need for federal tax incentives to encourage the installation of automatic fire sprinkler systems in residential and commercial buildings. The introduction of the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act is an important step in achieving this goal.

The cost of fire in America is enormous. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), in 2014, there were 1,298,000 fires reported in the United States, leading to 3,275 civilian fire deaths, 15,775 civilian injuries, and $11.6 billion in property damage. When you include the indirect cost of fire, such as lost economic activity, the cost is closer to $108 billion annually.

Studies by NFPA have concluded that buildings outfitted with sprinklers reduce the death rate per fire by at least 57% and decrease the property damage by up to 68%. By classifying the retrofit of an automatic fire sprinkler system as an eligible property under Section 179 of the tax code, the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act will save lives by allowing small and medium-sized businesses to deduct the cost of sprinkler systems up to $125,000.00. The legislation would also create a tax incentive for the retrofit of high-rise buildings. In the United States alone, there are nearly 10,000 high-rise fires annually. These structures, when not sprinklered, pose serious safety risks to both civilians and firefighters.

It is an incontrovertible fact that fire sprinklers save lives, including the lives of our firefighters. No firefighter has ever died while fighting a fire in a fully sprinklered structure. But unfortunately approximately 100 firefighters die in the line of duty every year. We, as a nation, owe it to our firefighters and their families to make the profession as safe as possible. The Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act will help us achieve that goal.

We strongly encourage all members of Congress to support this important piece of legislation. Thank you for your leadership on this issue, and best wishes on your continued success and safety.

Sincerely,

BILL WEBB,
Executive Director.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 2069. A bill to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to modify provisions relating to certain land exchanges in the Mt. Hood Wilderness in the State of Oregon; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I am introducing the Mt. Hood Cooper Spur Land Exchange Clarification Act. This bill is a necessary step to ensuring that the Cooper Spur land exchange on Mt. Hood proceeds as Congress originally intended when it passed as a part of the Omnibus Public Lands Bill in 2009. I am pleased to introduce this bill with my colleague from Oregon, Senator JEFF MERKLEY.

The Mt. Hood Cooper Spur land exchange was included in the Mt. Hood Wilderness designation that passed 6 years ago as part of the Omnibus Public Lands Act of 2009. The bill, which has now been law for over 6 years, directed several land exchanges including the Cooper Spur land exchange.

The Cooper Spur land exchange required the Forest Service to transfer approximately 120 acres of Federal land to Mt. Hood Meadows in exchange for approximately 770 acres of private land, with the goal of keeping development of Mt. Hood concentrated around the current development at Government Camp and ensuring the protection of the North side of the mountain. The swap was to be completed in 16 months. It is now 77 months later and the exchange has not moved forward. The delays have angered the public, endangered the environment, and have now spurred a lawsuit against the Forest Service.

The Mt. Hood Cooper Spur Land Exchange Clarification Act would make technical corrections to the Original Cooper Spur land exchange provisions in the Omnibus Public Lands Act to jumpstart the land exchange and keep the process moving forward so the exchange can finally be completed, as originally intended.

I introduced the original Mt. Hood Wilderness proposal in 2004 and again in 2006 and 2007 with my then-colleague Senator Gordon Smith of Oregon. As the Wilderness proposal and associated land exchanges took shape, more than 1,700 constituents provided input on the proposal. It was supported by members of the Oregon congressional delegation at the time, then-Governor Kulongoski, the Bush administration, and over 100 community groups. The Mt. Hood Cooper Spur Land Exchange Clarification Act is supported by Mt. Hood Meadows, Friends of Hood River Valley, Clackamas County, and Hood River County.

The Cooper Spur land exchange was an important part of the Mt. Hood Wilderness designation to ensure the protection of the undeveloped North side of the mountain. In turn, the Mt. Hood Cooper Spur Land Exchange Clarification Act is needed in order to ensure that the land exchange, a community-driven solution to the development challenges on Mt. Hood, is finally completed.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2069

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Mount Hood Cooper Spur Land Exchange Clarification Act''.

SEC. 2. COOPER SPUR LAND EXCHANGE CLARIFICATION AMENDMENTS.

Section 1206(a) of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (Public Law 111–11; 123 Stat. 1018) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''120 acres'' and inserting ''107 acres''; and

(B) in subparagraph (E)(ii), by inserting ''improvements,'' after ''buildings,''; and

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by amending the text of subparagraph (C) to read as follows: ''As a condition of the land exchange under this subsection, title to the non-Federal land to be acquired by the Secretary under this subsection shall be acceptable to the Secretary.'';

(B) in subparagraph (D)—

(i) in clause (i), by striking ''As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary and Mt. Hood Meadows shall select'' and inserting ''Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of the Mount Hood Cooper Spur Land Exchange Clarification Act, the Secretary and Mt. Hood Meadows shall jointly select'';

(ii) in clause (ii), in the matter preceding subclause (I), by striking ''An appraisal under clause (i) shall'' and inserting ''Except as provided under clause (iii), an appraisal under clause (i) shall assign a separate value to each tax lot to allow for the equalization of values and''; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(iii) FINAL APPRAISED VALUE.—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subclause (II), after the final appraised value of the Federal land and the non-Federal land are determined and approved by the Secretary, the Secretary shall not be required to reappraise or update the final appraised value for a period of up to 3 years, beginning on the date of the approval by the Secretary of the final appraised value.

''(II) EXCEPTION.—Subclause (I) shall not apply if the condition of either the Federal land or the non-Federal land referred to in subclause (I) is significantly and substantially altered by fire, windstorm, or other events.

''(iv) PUBLIC REVIEW.—Before completing the land exchange under this Act, the Secretary shall make available for public review the complete appraisals of the land to be exchanged.'';

(C) in subparagraph (F), by striking ''16 months after the date of enactment of this Act'' and inserting ''1 year after the date of the enactment of the Mount Hood Cooper Spur Land Exchange Clarification Act''; and

(D) by striking subparagraph (G) and inserting the following:

''(G) REQUIRED CONVEYANCE CONDITIONS.—Prior to the exchange of the Federal and non-Federal land—

''(i) in full satisfaction of Executive Order 11990, Mt. Hood Meadows shall obtain the concurrence of the Oregon Department of State Lands with the identification of wetland boundaries on the Federal land as designated on a wetland delineation report prepared by an independent professional engineer registered in the State of Oregon so as to provide protection of the identified wetland according to applicable law; and

''(ii) the Secretary shall reserve a 24-foot-wide nonexclusive trail easement at the existing trail locations on the Federal land that retains for the United States existing rights to construct, reconstruct, maintain, and permit nonmotorized use by the public of existing trails subject to the right of the owner of the Federal land—

''(I) to cross the trails with roads, utilities, and infrastructure facilities; and

''(II) to improve or relocate the trails to accommodate development of the Federal land.

''(H) EQUALIZATION OF VALUES.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), in addition to or in lieu of monetary compensation, a lesser area of Federal land or non-Federal land may be conveyed if necessary to equalize appraised values of the exchange properties, without limitation, consistent with the requirements of this Act and subject to the approval of the Secretary and Mt. Hood Meadows.

''(ii) TREATMENT OF CERTAIN COMPENSATION OR CONVEYANCES AS DONATION.—If, after payment of compensation or adjustment of land area subject to exchange under this Act, the amount by which the appraised value of the land and other property conveyed by Mt. Hood Meadows under subparagraph (A) exceeds the appraised value of the land conveyed by the Secretary under subparagraph (A) shall be considered a donation by Mt. Hood Meadows to the United States.''.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 261—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 11 THROUGH OCTOBER 17, 2015, AS ''NATIONAL CASE MANAGEMENT WEEK'' TO RECOGNIZE THE ROLE OF CASE MANAGEMENT IN IMPROVING HEALTH CARE OUTCOMES FOR PATIENTS

Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself and Mr. COTTON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 261

Whereas case management is a collaborative process of assessment, education, planning, facilitation, care coordination, evaluation, and advocacy;

Whereas the goal of case management is to meet the health needs of the patient and the family of the patient, while respecting and assuring the right of the patient to self-determination through communication and other available resources in order to promote high-quality, cost-effective outcomes;

Whereas case managers are advocates who help patients understand their current health status, guide patients on ways to improve their health, and provide cohesion with other professionals on the health care delivery team;

Whereas the American Case Management Association and the Case Management Society of America work diligently to raise awareness about the broad range of services that case managers offer and to educate providers, payers, regulators, and consumers on the improved patient outcomes that case management services can provide;

Whereas through National Case Management Week, the American Case Management Association and the Case Management Society of America aim to continue to educate providers, payers, regulators, and consumers about how vital case managers are to the successful delivery of health care;

Whereas the American Case Management Association and the Case Management Society of America will celebrate National Case Management Week during the week of October 11 through October 17, 2015, in order to recognize case managers as an essential link to patients receiving quality health care; and

Whereas it is appropriate to recognize the many achievements of case managers in improving health care outcomes: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of October 11 through October 17, 2015, as ''National Case Management Week'';

(2) recognizes the role of case management in providing successful and cost-effective health care; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to observe National Case Management Week and learn about the field of case management.

SENATE RESOLUTION 262—TO SUPPORT THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND URGE COUNTRIES TO #FREETHE20

Ms. AYOTTE (for herself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mrs. FISCHER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mrs. ERNST, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. CANTWELL, and Mrs. MURRAY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 262

Whereas, in 1995, representatives from 189 governments and tens of thousands of organizations met in Beijing at the Fourth World Conference on Women for the purpose of empowering women;

Whereas, at the Fourth World Conference on Women, the governments represented produced the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a roadmap seeking to advance gender equality and women's rights;

Whereas, on September 27, 2015, the United Nations will host the ''Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Commitment to Action'' at the United Nations headquarters in New York City;

Whereas, at this high level conference, governments will be invited to make commitments to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women;

Whereas the ongoing imprisonment by many countries of innocent women is contrary to Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;

Whereas some countries attending the conference at the United Nations imprison women for exercising universal human rights; and

Whereas, on September 1, 2015, the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations began a government-wide campaign to highlight the cases of women prisoners held unjustly around the world, including—

(1) Wang Yu of China, who—

(A) after being assaulted attempting to board a train in 2008, was sentenced to 2½-years in prison for assault;

(B) has taken on the cases of clients who other lawyers fear representing;

(C) has been harassed, threatened, and smeared in the state-run media; and

(D) was detained again on July 9, 2015;

(2) Khadija Ismayilova of Azerbaijan, who was—

(A) arrested in December 2014 in a crackdown on civil society activists and journalists; and

(B) sentenced on September 1, 2015, to 7½-years in prison after alleging government fraud;

(3) Bahareh Hedayat of Iran, a student activist and campaigner for women's rights, who—

(A) was arrested December 31, 2009 and charged with several ''offenses'' including interviews with foreign media and insulting the President and leader;

(B) was sentenced in May 2010 to—

(i) 6 months in prison for ''insulting the president'';

(ii) 2 years in prison for ''insulting the leader''; and

(iii) 5 years in prison for ''gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security'';

(C) received an additional 6 months in prison for having written a letter in December 2010 encouraging students to continue struggling peacefully for freedom; and

(D) was given an additional 2 year prison sentence on August 28, 2015;

(4) Blen Mesfin, Meron Alemayehu, and Nigist Wondifraw of Ethiopia, who were imprisoned after being charged with inciting violence during anti-Islamic State in Libya demonstrations in Addis Ababa in April 2015;

(5) Gao Yu of China, a 71 year old veteran journalist, who was initially arrested in April 2014 as authorities detained dozens of

rights activists and dissidents ahead of the 25th anniversary of the June 4 Tiananmen Square Massacre and was sentenced to 7 years in jail on April 17, 2015, on charges of ''leaking state secrets overseas'';

(6) Aster Yohannes of Eritrea, the wife of an imprisoned political activist, who—

(A) was arrested in 2003 upon returning from the United States;

(B) was never publicly accused of a crime or tried in a court of law; and

(C) is of unknown whereabouts;

(7) Matlyuba Kamilova of Uzbekistan, who—

(A) was jailed in September 2010 for alleged drug possession;

(B) was arrested under highly suspicious circumstances in the midst of efforts to expose police corruption; and

(C) remains in prison;

(8) Leyla Yunus of Azerbaijan, who—

(A) was arrested with her husband in August 2014 during a broad crackdown on civil society activists;

(B) was sentenced to an 8½-year prison term on August 13, 2015;

(C) was named by France as a Chevalier of the National Order of the Legion of Honour in 2013 in recognition of her human rights work; and

(D) received the Polish Prize of Sérgio Vieira de Mello in 2014;

(9) Phyoe Aung of Burma, who was arrested in March 2015, with over 100 participants, for leading protests advocating for reform to the education system of Burma;

(10) Ta Phong Tan of Vietnam, who was arrested in 2011 for ''anti-state propaganda'' for writing online articles alleging government corruption and was sentenced in 2012 to 10 years in prison with 2 years of house arrest to follow;

(11) Liu Xia of China, who—

(A) has been under house arrest since the 2010 announcement that her husband received the Nobel Peace Prize;

(B) is confined to her Beijing apartment without internet or phone access;

(C) is allowed only weekly trips to buy groceries and visit her parents;

(D) is allowed to visit Liu Xiaobo once a month; and

(E) reportedly suffers from heart problems and severe depression;

(12) Sanaa Seif of Egypt, who was sentenced in October 2014, with 23 other people, to 3 years in prison for conducting a peaceful demonstration without permission, a sentence which was reduced to 2 years in December 2014;

(13) Judge María Lourdes Afuini Mora of Venezuela, who—

(A) was imprisoned in December 2009 on charges of corruption and abuse of authority for releasing an imprisoned banker, was placed on house arrest until June 2013, and, according to President Chavez, ''must pay for what she has done''; and

(B) is on conditional release awaiting trial and is forbidden to leave the country or speak publicly;

(14) Naw Ohn Hla of Burma, who—

(A) is the co-founder of the Democracy and Peace Women Network and a prominent land rights and political prisoners advocate;

(B) was sentenced to a 4 years and 4 month term in prison on May 15, 2015, for protesting, in front of the Chinese Embassy in Rangoon, the deadly police crackdown at the Chinese company Wanbao's Letpadaung copper mine; and

(C) was, on June 29, 2015, given an additional 6 month prison term with hard labor for conducting a peaceful prayer service in 2007 protesting against Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest;

(15) Nadiya Savchenko of Russia, who—

(A) is a member of the parliament of Ukraine, the Verkhovna Rada, and a helicopter pilot in the Ukrainian military;

(B) was seized in Ukraine by Russian-backed separatists in 2014; and

(C) was illegally transferred to Russian custody, where she remains;

(16) serving as a composite for prisoners of concern worldwide, an estimated 80,000 to 120,000 political prisoners, including men, women, and children, who are detained in the brutal political prison camps of North Korea where starvation, forced labor, executions, rape, sexual violence, forced abortions, and torture are commonplace and whose offenses, according to defectors, include—

(A) burning old currency or criticizing the currency revaluation of the Government;

(B) sitting on newspapers bearing the picture of Kim Il Sung or Kim Jong Il;

(C) mentioning the limited formal education of Kim Il Sung; and

(D) defacing photographs of the Kims;

(17) Bui Thi Minh Hang of Vietnam—

(A) is an active anti-China demonstrator and vocal supporter of human rights and democracy, with a particular focus on helping victims and their families;

(B) was arrested on February 12, 2014 and is serving a 3 year sentence for ''disrupting public order''; and

(C) was detained without trial for 6 months at a ''reeducation center'' prior to her arrest in February of 2014; and

(18) Rasha Chorbaji of Syria—

(A) who was arrested trying to obtain a passport in 2014 with 3 of her children because her husband opposed the regime during the revolution; and

(B) whose children were taken by the Government of Syria and placed in an orphanage, and whose husband drowned in the Mediterranean Sea while fleeing Syria: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the high level conference in September 2015 at the United Nations to empower women;

(2) recognizes that many women will not be able to participate in the dialogue about the conference in September 2015 because they are imprisoned unjustly;

(3) reiterates support for efforts to empower women and secure universal human rights for women;

(4) reminds governments attending the conference that unjustly imprisoning women is inconsistent with the Beijing Declaration and does not empower women;

(5) welcomes the release of Ta Phong Tan of Vietnam on September 19, 2015, whose release was called for as part of the campaign;

(6) calls for the immediate release of the women mentioned in the preamble of this resolution, most of whom remain wrongfully imprisoned or under house arrest; and

(7) encourages conference attendees to fulfill previous commitments related to the empowerment of women and to commit to meaningful and concrete steps to advance women's rights, for the betterment of all people.

SENATE RESOLUTION 263—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL RETIREMENT SECURITY WEEK, INCLUDING RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE VARIOUS TAX-PREFERRED RETIREMENT VEHICLES, INCREASING PERSONAL FINANCIAL LITERACY, AND ENGAGING THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES ON THE KEYS TO SUCCESS IN ACHIEVING AND MAINTAINING RETIREMENT SECURITY THROUGHOUT THEIR LIFETIMES

Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. WYDEN, and Ms. COLLINS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 263

Whereas people in the United States are living longer, and the cost of retirement is increasing significantly;

Whereas Social Security remains the bedrock of retirement income for the great majority of the people of the United States but was never intended by Congress to be the sole source of retirement income for families;

Whereas recent data from the Employee Benefit Research Institute indicates that, in the United States—

(1) only approximately ⅔ of workers or the spouses of the workers are saving for retirement; and

(2) the amount that workers have saved for retirement is much less than the amount the workers need to adequately fund their retirement years;

Whereas the financial literacy of workers in the United States is important for the workers to understand the need to save for retirement;

Whereas saving for retirement is a key component of overall financial health and security during retirement years, and the importance of financial literacy in planning for retirement must be advocated;

Whereas many workers may not—

(1) be aware of the various options in saving for retirement; or

(2) have focused on the importance of, and need for, saving for retirement and successfully achieving retirement security;

Whereas, although many employees have access through their employers to defined benefit and defined contribution plans to assist the employees in preparing for retirement, many of the employees may not be taking advantage of those plans at all or to the full extent allowed by Federal law;

Whereas saving for retirement is necessary even during economic downturns or market declines, which makes continued contributions all the more important;

Whereas all workers, including public and private sector employees, employees of tax-exempt organizations, and self-employed individuals, can benefit from developing personal budgets and financial plans that include retirement savings strategies that take advantage of tax-preferred retirement savings vehicles;

Whereas effectively and sustainably withdrawing retirement resources throughout the retirement years of an individual is as important and crucial as saving and accumulating funds for retirement; and

Whereas the week of October 18 through October 24, 2015 has been designated as ''National Retirement Security Week'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Retirement Security Week, including

raising public awareness of the importance of saving adequately for retirement;

(2) acknowledges the need to raise public awareness of a variety of tax-preferred retirement vehicles that are used by many people in the United States but could be used by more; and

(3) calls on States, localities, schools, universities, nonprofit organizations, businesses, other entities, and the people of the United States to observe National Retirement Security Week with appropriate programs and activities, with the goal of increasing the retirement savings and personal financial literacy of all people in the United States, thereby enhancing the retirement security of the people of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 264—DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 23, 2015, AS ''NATIONAL FALLS PREVENTION AWARENESS DAY'' TO RAISE AWARENESS AND ENCOURAGE THE PREVENTION OF FALLS AMONG OLDER ADULTS

Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mrs. MCCASKILL) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 264

Whereas older adults, 65 years of age and older, are the fastest-growing segment of the population in the United States;

Whereas the number of older adults in the United States will increase from 35,000,000 in 2000 to 82,300,000 in 2040;

Whereas 1 out of 3 adults over age 65 in the United States falls each year;

Whereas falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries among older adults;

Whereas, in 2013, approximately 2,500,000 older adults were treated in hospital emergency departments for fall-related injuries, and more than 734,000 were subsequently hospitalized;

Whereas, in 2013, more than 25,500 older adults died from injuries related to unintentional falls, and the death rates from falls among older adults in the United States have risen sharply in the last decade;

Whereas, in 2013, the total direct medical cost of fall-related injuries for older adults, adjusted for inflation, was $34,000,000,000;

Whereas if the rate of increase in falls is not slowed, the annual cost of fall injuries will reach $67,700,000,000 by 2020; and

Whereas evidence-based programs show promise in reducing falls by utilizing cost-effective strategies, such as exercise programs to improve balance and strength, medication management, vision improvement, reduction of home hazards, and fall prevention education: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates September 23, 2015, as ''National Falls Prevention Awareness Day'';

(2) recognizes that there are proven, cost-effective falls prevention programs and policies;

(3) commends the 72 member organizations of the Falls Free Coalition and the falls prevention coalitions in 43 States and the District of Columbia for their efforts to work together to increase education and awareness about preventing falls among older adults;

(4) encourages businesses, individuals, Federal, State, and local governments, the public health community, and health care providers to work together to raise awareness of falls in an effort to reduce the incidence of falls among older adults in the United States;

(5) urges the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to continue developing and evaluating interventions to prevent falls among older adults that will translate into effective community-based falls prevention programs;

(6) urges the Administration for Community Living, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and partners to continue to promote evidence-based programs and services in communities across the United States to reduce the number of older adults at risk for falls;

(7) encourages State health departments and State Units on Aging, which provide significant leadership in reducing injuries and related health care costs by collaborating with organizations and individuals, to reduce falls among older adults; and

(8) encourages experts in the field of falls prevention to share their best practices so that their success can be replicated by others.

SENATE RESOLUTION 265—HONORING THE LIFE, ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND LEGACY OF CONGRESSMAN LOUIS STOKES

Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. PORTMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 265

Whereas Louis Stokes was born on February 23, 1925, in Cleveland, Ohio, to Charles and Louise Cinthy Stokes;

Whereas, in 1943, Louis Stokes graduated from Central High School in Cleveland, Ohio;

Whereas, from 1943 to 1946, Louis Stokes served as a personnel specialist in the United States Army;

Whereas, following these years of military service, Louis Stokes returned to Cleveland and attended the Cleveland College of Western Reserve University from 1946 to 1948 and earned a Juris Doctor from the Cleveland Marshall School of Law in 1953;

Whereas Louis Stokes practiced law in Cleveland, Ohio for 14 years and was one of the founders of the Stokes, Stokes, Character and Terry law firm;

Whereas, during his time at his law firm, Louis Stokes became involved in a number of civil rights related cases, often working pro bono on behalf of poor clients and activists;

Whereas Louis Stokes argued 3 cases before the Supreme Court of the United States, including the landmark case of Terry v. Ohio, 392 U.S. 1 (1968), which defined the legality of police search and seizure procedures;

Whereas, on November 6, 1968, Louis Stokes was elected to the House of Representatives, representing the 21st (later the 11th) District of Ohio;

Whereas, upon his election, Louis Stokes became the first African-American to represent Ohio in the House of Representatives;

Whereas Congressman Stokes was a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus, an organization comprised of the Black Members of the Congress and created to be the voice for people of color and vulnerable communities;

Whereas Congressman Stokes served as the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus for 2 terms;

Whereas, in 1971, Congressman Stokes was the first African-American to serve on the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and, by his retirement in 1998, had earned the distinguished rank of ''Cardinal'' as chairman of the Subcommittee on VA-HUD-Independent Agencies;

Whereas Congressman Stokes chaired a number of historic committees, including—

(1) the House Select Committee on the Assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the 95th Congress;

(2) the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence in the 100th Congress; and

(3) the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct in the 97th and 98th Congresses;

Whereas Congressman Stokes also served on the Committee on the Budget of the House of Representatives and gained national prominence as a member of the House Select Committee to Investigate Covert Arms Transactions with Iran in 1987;

Whereas, in 1998, Congressman Stokes successfully led the House of Representatives in passing H.R. 1635, the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Act, which was his final major piece of legislation;

Whereas, after serving 15 consecutive terms in the House of Representatives, Congressman Stokes ranked 11th out of 435 Members of Congress in seniority and was the dean of the Ohio delegation;

Whereas few Members have left such an indelible mark in the House of Representatives;

Whereas with kindness, integrity, and diligence, Congressman Stokes worked hard with both sides of the aisle to serve the constituents of his Congressional District, the city of Cleveland, the State of Ohio, and citizens of the United States;

Whereas Congressman Stokes worked tirelessly for minorities, the poor, and disadvantaged persons;

Whereas Congressman Stokes played a pivotal role in the quest for civil rights, equality, and justice;

Whereas the Christian faith of Congressman Stokes was the foundation of his service to others;

Whereas Congressman Stokes often expressed gratitude for the sacrifices of his mother—a young widow, former sharecropper, and daughter of slaves—who inspired her sons to get an education so that her sons would not have to work with their hands as she had done as a domestic worker;

Whereas Congressman Stokes received numerous awards and honors during his lifetime that recognize his leadership and his commitment to public service;

Whereas there are several landmarks in the city of Cleveland that bear the name of Congressman Stokes, including the Louis Stokes Wing of the Cleveland Public Library, the Louis Stokes Health Sciences Center at Case Western Reserve University, and the Louis Stokes Cleveland Veterans Affairs Medical Center;

Whereas nationally, buildings named in honor of Congressman Stokes include the Louis Stokes Laboratories at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland and the Louis Stokes Health Sciences Library at Howard University in Washington, DC;

Whereas, given his commitment to education, the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP) in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) at the National Science Foundation also bears the name of Congressman Stokes;

Whereas LSAMP assists universities and colleges in increasing the number of students completing high quality degree programs in the STEM disciplines in order to diversify the STEM workforce;

Whereas Louis Stokes received 26 honorary doctorate degrees from colleges and universities; and

Whereas, on July 8, 2003, Congressman Stokes was honored by the Congress with the

Congressional Distinguished Service Award: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors the life, accomplishments, and legacy of Congressman Louis Stokes; and

(2) extends its heartfelt sympathies and condolences to the family, friends, and loved ones of Congressman Louis Stokes.

SENATE RESOLUTION 266—DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 2015 AS ''NATIONAL KINSHIP CARE MONTH''

Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. HATCH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 266

Whereas in September 2015, ''National Kinship Care Month'' is observed;

Whereas nationally 2,700,000 children are living in kinship care with grandparents or other relatives;

Whereas grandparents and relatives residing in urban, rural, and suburban households in every county of the United States have stepped forward out of love and loyalty to care for children during times in which biological parents are unable to do so;

Whereas kinship caregivers provide safety, promote well-being, and establish stable households for vulnerable children;

Whereas kinship care enables a child—

(1) to maintain family relationships and cultural heritage; and

(2) to remain in the community of the child;

Whereas kinship care is a national resource that provides loving homes for children at risk;

Whereas kinship caregivers face daunting challenges to keep countless children from entering foster care;

Whereas the Senate is proud to recognize the many kinship care families in which a child is raised by grandparents or other relatives;

Whereas the Senate wishes to honor the many kinship caregivers who throughout the history of the United States have provided loving homes for parentless children;

Whereas National Kinship Care Month provides an opportunity to urge people in every State to join in recognizing and celebrating kinship caregiving families and the tradition of families in the United States to help raise children; and

Whereas much remains to be done to ensure that all children have a safe, loving, nurturing, and permanent family, regardless of age or special needs: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates September 2015 as ''National Kinship Care Month'';

(2) encourages Congress to implement policies to improve the lives of vulnerable children and families;

(3) honors the commitment and dedication of kinship caregivers and the advocates and allies who work tirelessly to provide assistance and services to kinship caregiving families; and

(4) reaffirms the need to continue working to improve the outcomes of all vulnerable children through parts B and E of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.), and other programs designed—

(A) to support vulnerable families;

(B) to invest in prevention and reunification services; and

(C) to ensure that extended family members who take on the role of kinship caregivers receive the necessary support.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2669. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. COCHRAN) proposed an amendment to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 61, amending the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

SA 2670. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2669 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. COCHRAN) to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 61, supra.

SA 2671. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2670 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the amendment SA 2669 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. COCHRAN) to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 61, supra.

SA 2672. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 61, supra.

SA 2673. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2672 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 61, supra.

SA 2674. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 61, supra.

SA 2675. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2674 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 61, supra.

SA 2676. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2675 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the amendment SA 2674 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 61, supra.

SA 2677. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. LANKFORD (for himself and Mr . INHOFE)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1632, to require a regional strategy to address the threat posed by Boko Haram.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2669. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. COCHRAN) proposed an amendment to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 61, amending the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; as follows:

Strike out all after the resolving clause and insert the following:

The following sums are hereby appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, and out of applicable corporate or other revenues, receipts, and funds, for the several departments, agencies, corporations, and other organizational units of Government for fiscal year 2016, and for other purposes, namely:

SEC. 101. (a) Such amounts as may be necessary, at a rate for operations as provided in the applicable appropriations Acts for fiscal year 2015 and under the authority and conditions provided in such Acts, for continuing projects or activities (including the costs of direct loans and loan guarantees) that are not otherwise specifically provided for in this Act, that were conducted in fiscal year 2015, and for which appropriations, funds, or other authority were made available in the following appropriations Acts:

(1) The Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015 (division A of Public Law 113–235), except section 743 and title VIII.

(2) The Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015 (division B of Public Law 113–235).

(3) The Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2015 (division C of Public Law 113–235), except title X.

(4) The Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015 (division D of Public Law 113–235).

(5) The Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act, 2015 (division E of Public Law 113–235).

(6) The Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2015 (Public Law 114–4).

(7) The Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015 (division F of Public Law 113–235).

(8) The Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015 (division G of Public Law 113–235), except title VI.

(9) The Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2015 (division H of Public Law 113–235).

(10) The Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015 (division I of Public Law 113–235).

(11) The Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2015 (division J of Public Law 113–235), except title IX.

(12) The Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015 (division K of Public Law 113–235).

(13) Section 11 of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (Public Law 113–235).

(b) The rate for operations provided by subsection (a) is hereby reduced by 0.2108 percent.

SEC. 102. (a) No appropriation or funds made available or authority granted pursuant to section 101 for the Department of Defense shall be used for: (1) the new production of items not funded for production in fiscal year 2015 or prior years; (2) the increase in production rates above those sustained with fiscal year 2015 funds; or (3) the initiation, resumption, or continuation of any project, activity, operation, or organization (defined as any project, subproject, activity, budget activity, program element, and subprogram within a program element, and for any investment items defined as a P–1 line item in a budget activity within an appropriation account and an R–1 line item that includes a program element and subprogram element within an appropriation account) for which appropriations, funds, or other authority were not available during fiscal year 2015.

(b) No appropriation or funds made available or authority granted pursuant to section 101 for the Department of Defense shall be used to initiate multi-year procurements utilizing advance procurement funding for economic order quantity procurement unless specifically appropriated later.

SEC. 103. Appropriations made by section 101 shall be available to the extent and in the manner that would be provided by the pertinent appropriations Act.

SEC. 104. Except as otherwise provided in section 102, no appropriation or funds made available or authority granted pursuant to section 101 shall be used to initiate or resume any project or activity for which appropriations, funds, or other authority were not available during fiscal year 2015.

SEC. 105. Appropriations made and authority granted pursuant to this Act shall cover all obligations or expenditures incurred for any project or activity during the period for

which funds or authority for such project or activity are available under this Act.

SEC. 106. Unless otherwise provided for in this Act or in the applicable appropriations Act for fiscal year 2016, appropriations and funds made available and authority granted pursuant to this Act shall be available until whichever of the following first occurs: (1) the enactment into law of an appropriation for any project or activity provided for in this Act; (2) the enactment into law of the applicable appropriations Act for fiscal year 2016 without any provision for such project or activity; or (3) December 11, 2015.

SEC. 107. Expenditures made pursuant to this Act shall be charged to the applicable appropriation, fund, or authorization whenever a bill in which such applicable appropriation, fund, or authorization is contained is enacted into law.

SEC. 108. Appropriations made and funds made available by or authority granted pursuant to this Act may be used without regard to the time limitations for submission and approval of apportionments set forth in section 1513 of title 31, United States Code, but nothing in this Act may be construed to waive any other provision of law governing the apportionment of funds.

SEC. 109. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, except section 106, for those programs that would otherwise have high initial rates of operation or complete distribution of appropriations at the beginning of fiscal year 2016 because of distributions of funding to States, foreign countries, grantees, or others, such high initial rates of operation or complete distribution shall not be made, and no grants shall be awarded for such programs funded by this Act that would impinge on final funding prerogatives.

SEC. 110. This Act shall be implemented so that only the most limited funding action of that permitted in the Act shall be taken in order to provide for continuation of projects and activities.

SEC. 111. (a) For entitlements and other mandatory payments whose budget authority was provided in appropriations Acts for fiscal year 2015, and for activities under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, activities shall be continued at the rate to maintain program levels under current law, under the authority and conditions provided in the applicable appropriations Act for fiscal year 2015, to be continued through the date specified in section 106(3).

(b) Notwithstanding section 106, obligations for mandatory payments due on or about the first day of any month that begins after October 2015 but not later than 30 days after the date specified in section 106(3) may continue to be made, and funds shall be available for such payments.

SEC. 112. Amounts made available under section 101 for civilian personnel compensation and benefits in each department and agency may be apportioned up to the rate for operations necessary to avoid furloughs within such department or agency, consistent with the applicable appropriations Act for fiscal year 2015, except that such authority provided under this section shall not be used until after the department or agency has taken all necessary actions to reduce or defer non-personnel-related administrative expenses.

SEC. 113. Funds appropriated by this Act may be obligated and expended notwithstanding section 10 of Public Law 91–672 (22 U.S.C. 2412), section 15 of the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 2680), section 313 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995 (22 U.S.C. 6212), and section 504(a)(1) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3094(a)(1)).

SEC. 114. (a) Each amount incorporated by reference in this Act that was previously designated by the Congress for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 or as being for disaster relief pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(D) of such Act is designated by the Congress for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of such Act or as being for disaster relief pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(D) of such Act, respectively.

(b) The reduction in section 101(b) of this Act shall not apply to—

(1) amounts designated under subsection (a) of this section; or

(2) amounts made available by section 101(a) by reference to the second paragraph under the heading ''Social Security Administration—Limitation on Administrative Expenses'' in division G of Public Law 113–235; or

(3) amounts made available by section 101(a) by reference to the paragraph under the heading ''Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services—Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control Account'' in division G of Public Law 113–235.

(c) Section 6 of Public Law 113–235 shall apply to amounts designated in subsection (a) for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism.

SEC. 115. During the period covered by this Act, discretionary amounts appropriated for fiscal year 2016 that were provided in advance by appropriations Acts shall be available in the amounts provided in such Acts, reduced by the percentage in section 101(b).

SEC. 116. Notwithstanding section 101, amounts are provided for ''Department of Agriculture—Domestic Food Programs—Food and Nutrition Service—Commodity Assistance Program'' at a rate for operations of $288,317,000, of which $221,298,000 shall be for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program.

SEC. 117. Amounts made available by section 101 for ''Department of Agriculture—Rural Housing Service—Rental Assistance Program'' may be apportioned up to the rate for operations necessary to pay ongoing debt service for the multi-family direct loan programs under sections 514 and 515 of the Housing Act of 1949 (42 U.S.C. 1484 and 1485): *Provided*, That the Secretary may waive the prohibition in the second proviso under such heading in division A of Public Law 113–235 with respect to rental assistance contracts entered into or renewed during fiscal year 2015.

SEC. 118. Amounts made available by section 101 for ''Department of Commerce—National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—Procurement, Acquisition and Construction'' may be apportioned up to the rate for operations necessary to maintain the planned launch schedules for the Joint Polar Satellite System.

SEC. 119. (a) The first proviso under the heading ''United States Marshals Service—Federal Prisoner Detention'' in title II of division B of Public Law 113–235 shall not apply during the period covered by this Act.

(b) The limitation in section 217(c) of division B of Public Law 113–235 on the amount of excess unobligated balances available under section 524(c)(8)(E) of title 28, United States Code, shall not apply under this Act to the use of such funds for ''United States Marshals Service—Federal Prisoner Detention''.

SEC. 120. (a) The authority regarding closeout of Space Shuttle contracts and associated programs provided by language under the heading ''National Aeronautics and Space Administration—Administrative Provisions'' in the Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009 (Public Law 111–8) shall continue in effect through fiscal year 2021.

(b) This section shall be applied as if it were in effect on September 30, 2015.

SEC. 121. (a) Notwithstanding section 1552 of title 31, United States Code, funds made available, including funds that have expired but have not been cancelled, and identified by Treasury Appropriation Fund Symbol 13–09/10–0554 shall remain available for expenditure through fiscal year 2020 for the purpose of liquidating valid obligations of active grants.

(b) For the purpose of subsection (a), grants for which the period of performance has expired but are not finally closed out shall be considered active grants.

(c) This section shall be applied as if it were in effect on September 30, 2015.

SEC. 122. The following provisions shall be applied by substituting ''2016'' for ''2015'' through the earlier of the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act or the date of the enactment of an Act authorizing appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense:

(1) Section 1215(f)(1) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012 (Public Law 112–81; 10 U.S.C. 113 note), as most recently amended by section 1237 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. ''Buck'' McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (Public Law 113–291).

(2) Section 127b(c)(3)(C) of title 10, United States Code.

SEC. 123. (a) Funds made available by section 101 for ''Department of Energy—Energy Programs—Uranium Enrichment Decontamination and Decommissioning Fund'' may be apportioned up to the rate for operations necessary to avoid disruption of continuing projects or activities funded in this appropriation.

(b) The Secretary of Energy shall notify the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate not later than 3 days after each use of the authority provided in subsection (a).

SEC. 124. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, except section 106, the District of Columbia may expend local funds under the heading ''District of Columbia Funds'' for such programs and activities under the District of Columbia Appropriations Act, 2015 (title IV of division E of Public Law 113–235) at the rate set forth under ''District of Columbia Funds—Summary of Expenses'' as included in the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Request Act of 2015 (D.C. Act 21–99), as modified as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 125. Notwithstanding section 101, no funds are provided by this Act for ''Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board—Salaries and Expenses''.

SEC. 126. Amounts made available by section 101 for ''Small Business Administration—Business Loans Program Account'' may be apportioned up to the rate for operations necessary to accommodate increased demand for commitments for general business loans authorized under section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)).

SEC. 127. Sections 1101(a) and 1104(a)(2)(A) of the Internet Tax Freedom Act (title XI of division C of Public Law 105–277; 47 U.S.C. 151 note) shall be applied by substituting the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act for ''October 1, 2015''.

SEC. 128. Section 101 shall be applied by assuming that section 7 of Public Law 113–235 was enacted as part of title VII of division E of Public Law 113–235.

SEC. 129. The authority provided by section 831 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 391) shall continue in effect through the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act.

SEC. 130. Section 401(b) of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (8 U.S.C. 1324a note) shall

be applied by substituting the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act for ''September 30, 2015''.

SEC. 131. Section 610(b) of the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1993 (8 U.S.C. 1153 note) shall be applied by substituting the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act for ''September 30, 2015''.

SEC. 132. Subclauses 101(a)(27)(C)(ii)(II) and (III) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(27)(C)(ii)(II) and (III)) shall be applied by substituting the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act for ''September 30, 2015''.

SEC. 133. Section 220(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Technical Corrections Act of 1994 (8 U.S.C. 1182 note) shall be applied by substituting the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act for ''September 30, 2015''.

SEC. 134. Section 810 of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (16 U.S.C. 6809) is amended by striking all that follows after ''shall terminate'' and inserting ''September 30, 2017.''.

SEC. 135. In addition to the amount otherwise provided by section 101 for ''Department of Agriculture—Forest Service—Wildland Fire Management'', there is appropriated $700,000,000 for an additional amount for fiscal year 2016, to remain available until expended, for urgent wildland fire suppression activities: *Provided*, That such funds shall only become available if funds previously provided for wildland fire suppression will be exhausted imminently and the Secretary of Agriculture notifies the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate in writing of the need for these additional funds: *Provided further*, That such funds are also available for transfer to other appropriations accounts to repay amounts previously transferred for wildfire suppression: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, except that such amount shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates such amount and transmits such designation to the Congress.

SEC. 136. The authorities provided by sections 117 and 123 of division G of Public Law 113–76 shall continue in effect through the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act.

SEC. 137. (a) The authority provided by subsection (m)(3) of section 8162 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2000 (40 U.S.C. 8903 note; Public Law 106–79) shall continue in effect through the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act.

(b) For the period covered by this Act, the authority provided by the provisos under the heading ''Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission—Capital Construction'' in division E of Public Law 112–74 shall not be in effect.

SEC. 138. Section 3096(2) of the Carl Levin and Howard P. ''Buck'' McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 is amended by inserting ''for fiscal year 2015'' after ''$37,000,000''.

SEC. 139. Funds made available in prior appropriations Acts for construction and renovation of facilities for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention may also be used for construction on leased land.

SEC. 140. Subsection (b) of section 163 of Public Law 111–242, as amended, is further amended by striking ''2015–2016'' and inserting ''2016–2017''.

SEC. 141. Section 101 shall be applied by assuming that section 139 of Public Law 113–164 was enacted as part of division G of Public Law 113–235, and section 139 of Public Law 113–164 shall be applied by adding at the end the following: ''and of the unobligated balance of amounts deposited or available in the Child Enrollment Contingency Fund from appropriations to the Fund under section 2104(n)(2)(A)(i) of the Social Security Act and the income derived from investment of those funds pursuant to 2104(n)(2)(C) of that Act, $1,664,000,000 is rescinded''.

SEC. 142. Section 114(f) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1011c(f)) shall be applied by substituting the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act for ''September 30, 2015''.

SEC. 143. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, there is appropriated for payment to Tori B. Nunnelee, widow of Alan Nunnelee, late a Representative from the State of Mississippi, $174,000.

SEC. 144. Of the discretionary unobligated balances of the Department of Veterans Affairs from fiscal year 2015 or prior fiscal years, or discretionary amounts appropriated in advance for fiscal year 2016, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may transfer up to $625,000,000 to ''Department of Veterans Affairs—Departmental Administration—Construction, Major Projects'', to be merged with the amounts available in such account: *Provided*, That no amounts may be transferred from amounts that were designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget, the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, or the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010: *Provided further*, That no amounts may be transferred until the Secretary submits to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate a request for, and receives from the Committees written approval of, such transfers: *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall specify in such request the donor account and amount of each proposed transfer, the fiscal year of each appropriation to be transferred, the amount of unobligated balances remaining in the account after the transfer, and the project or program impact of the transfer.

SEC. 145. Notwithstanding section 101, amounts are provided for ''Department of Veterans Affairs—Departmental Administration—General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration'' at a rate for operations of $2,697,734,000.

SEC. 146. Notwithstanding section 101, section 226(a) of division I of Public Law 113–235 shall be applied to amounts made available by this Act by substituting ''division I of Public Law 113–235'' for ''division J of Public Law 113–76'' and by substituting ''2015'' for ''2014''.

SEC. 147. Section 209 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6436) shall be applied by substituting the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act for ''September 30, 2015''.

SEC. 148. Amounts made available by section 101 for ''Broadcasting Board of Governors—International Broadcasting Operations'', ''Bilateral Economic Assistance—Funds Appropriated to the President—Economic Support Fund'', ''International Security Assistance—Department of State—International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement'', ''International Security Assistance—Department of State—Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining and Related Programs'', and ''International Security Assistance—Funds Appropriated to the President Foreign Military Financing Program'' shall be obligated at a rate for operations as necessary to sustain assistance for Ukraine to counter external, regional aggression and influence, including for the costs of authorized loan guarantees.

SEC. 149. Section 1334 of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6553) shall be applied by substituting the date specified in section 106(3) of this Act for ''October 1, 2015''.

SEC. 150. (a) Funds made available by section 101 for ''Department of Housing and Urban Development—Management and Administration—Administrative Support Offices'' may be apportioned up to the rate for operations necessary to maintain the planned schedule for the New Core Shared Services Project.

(b) Not later than 3 days before the first use of the apportionment authority in subsection (a), each 30 days thereafter, and 3 days after the authority expires under this Act, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report specifying each use of the authority through the date of the report.

SEC. 151. (a) Section 48103(a) of title 49, United States Code, shall be applied: (1) by substituting the amount specified in such section with $1,610,000,000; and (2) by substituting the fiscal year specified in such section with the period beginning October 1, 2015, and ending on March 31, 2016.

(b) Section 47104(c), 47107(r)(3), and 47115(j) of title 49, United States Code, shall each be applied by substituting ''2016'' for ''2015''.

(c) Section 47141(f) of title 49, United States Code, shall be applied by substituting ''March 31, 2016'' for ''September 30, 2015''.

(d) For purposes of calculating funding apportionments and meeting other requirements under sections 47114, 47115, 47116, and 47117 of title 49, United States Code, for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on March 31, 2016, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall—

(1) first calculate funding apportionments on an annualized basis as if the total amount available under section 48103 of such title for fiscal year 2016 were $3,220,000,000; and

(2) then reduce by 50 percent—

(A) all funding apportionments calculated under paragraph (1); and

(B) amounts available pursuant to sections 47117(b) and 47117(f)(2) of such title.

(e) Section 409(d) of the Vision 100—Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act (49 U.S.C. 41731 note) shall be applied by substituting ''March 31, 2016'' for ''September 30, 2015''.

(f) Nothing in this section shall affect the availability of any balances of contract authority provided under section 48103 of title 49, United States Code, for fiscal year 2015 or any prior fiscal year.

(g) Section 186(d) of the Vision 100—Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act (117 Stat. 2518) is amended by inserting ''and for the period beginning on October 1, 2015, and ending on March 31, 2016,'' after ''fiscal years 2012 through 2015''.

(h) This section shall be in effect through March 31, 2016.

SEC. 152. (a) Notwithstanding section 106, sections 4081(d)(2)(B), 4261(j), 4261(k)(1)(A)(ii), and 4271(d)(1)(A)(ii) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall each be applied by substituting ''March 31, 2016'' for ''September 30, 2015''.

(b) Notwithstanding section 106, section 4083(b) and subsections (d)(1) and (e)(2) of section 9502 of such Code shall each be applied by substituting ''April 1, 2016'' for ''October 1, 2015''.

(c) Subparagraph (A) of section 9502(d)(1) of such Code is amended by inserting ''or any Act making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2016'' before the semicolon at the end.

SEC. 153. (a) Congress finds the following:

(1) State and county health departments, community health centers, hospitals, physicians offices, and other entities currently provide, and will continue to provide, health services to women. Such health services include relevant diagnostic laboratory and radiology services, well-child care, prenatal

and postpartum care, immunization, family planning services (including contraception), cervical and breast cancer screenings and referrals, and sexually transmitted disease testing.

(2) Many such entities provide services to all persons, regardless of the person's ability to pay, and provide services in medically underserved areas and to medically underserved populations.

(3) All funds that are no longer available to Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc. and its affiliates and clinics pursuant to this section will continue to be made available to other eligible entities to provide women's health care services.

(4) Funds authorized to be appropriated, and appropriated, by subsection (e) of this section are offset by the funding limitation under subsection (b) of this section.

(b) For the one-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, subject to subsection (c) of this section, no funds authorized or appropriated by Federal law may be made available for any purpose to Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc., or any affiliate or clinic of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc., unless such entities certify that Planned Parenthood Federation of America affiliates and clinics will not perform, and will not provide any funds to any other entity that performs, an abortion during such period.

(c) Subsection (b) of this section shall not apply to an abortion—

(1) if the pregnancy is the result of an act of rape or incest; or

(2) in the case where a woman suffers from a physical disorder, physical injury, or physical illness that would, as certified by a physician, place the woman in danger of death unless an abortion is performed, including a life-endangering physical condition caused by or arising from the pregnancy itself.

(d) The Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Agriculture shall seek repayment of any Federal assistance received by Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc., or any affiliate or clinic of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc., if it violates the terms of the certification required by subsection (b) of this section during the period specified in subsection (b) of this section.

(e) There is authorized to be appropriated, and appropriated, $235,000,000 for the community health center program under section 330 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b), in addition to any other funds made available to such program, for the period for which the funding limitation under subsection (b) of this section applies.

(f) None of the funds authorized or appropriated pursuant to subsection (e) of this section may be expended for an abortion other than as described in subsection (c) of this section.

(g) Nothing in this section shall be construed to reduce overall Federal funding available in support of women's health.

This Act may be cited as the ''Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2016''.

SA 2670. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2669 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. COCHRAN) to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 61, amending the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; as follows:

At the end add the following.

''This Act shall take effect 1 day after the date of enactment.''

SA 2671. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2670 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the amendment SA 2669 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. COCHRAN) to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 61, amending the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; as follows:

Strike ''1 day'' and insert ''2 days''

SA 2672. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 61, amending the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; as follows:

At the end add the following.

''This Act shall take effect 3 days after the date of enactment.''

SA 2673. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2672 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 61, amending the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; as follows:

Strike ''3'' and insert ''4''

SA 2674. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 61, amending the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; as follows:

At the end add the following.

''This Act shall take effect 5 days after the date of enactment.''

SA 2675. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2674 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 61, amending the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; as follows:

Strike ''5'' and insert ''6''

SA 2676. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2675 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the amendment SA 2674 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 61, amending the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; as follows:

Strike ''6'' and insert ''7''

SA 2677. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. LANKFORD (for himself and Mr. INHOFE)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1632, to require a regional strategy to address the threat posed by Boko Haram; as follows:

On page 8, strike lines 5 through 16 and insert the following:

(b) ASSESSMENT.—The Director of National Intelligence shall submit, to the appropriate committees of Congress, an assessment regarding—

(1) the willingness and capability of the Government of Nigeria and regional partners to implement the strategy developed under subsection (a), including the capability gaps, if any, of the Government and military forces of Nigeria that would need to be addressed to enable the Government of Nigeria and the governments of its partner countries in the region—

(A) to counter the threat of Boko Haram; and

(B) to address the legitimate grievances of vulnerable populations in areas affected by Boko Haram; and

(2) significant United States intelligence gaps concerning Boko Haram or on the willingness and capacity of the Government of Nigeria and regional partners to implement the strategy developed under subsection (a).

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 22, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 22, 2015, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Nominations.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 22, 2015, at 9:30 a.m., to

conduct a hearing entitled ''Improving VA Accountability: Examining First-Hand Accounts of Department of Veterans Affairs Whistleblowers.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 22, 2015, at 2:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ANTITRUST, COMPETITION POLICY AND CONSUMER RIGHTS.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Antitrust, Competition Policy and Consumer Rights, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 22, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–1A226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Examining Consolidation in the Health Insurance Industry and its Impact on Consumers.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that David McFarland, a fellow detailed to my office from the Department of State, be granted privileges of the floor for the remainder of the Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REQUIRING A REGIONAL STRATEGY TO ADDRESS THE THREAT POSED BY BOKO HARAM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 175, S. 1632.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1632) to require a regional strategy to address the threat posed by Boko Haram.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. REGIONAL STRATEGY TO ADDRESS THE THREAT POSED BY BOKO HARAM.

(a) STRATEGY REQUIRED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense shall jointly develop and submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a five-year strategy to help enable the Government of Nigeria, members of the Multinational Joint Task Force to Combat Boko Haram (MNJTF) authorized by the African Union, and relevant partners to counter the regional threat of Boko Haram and assist the Government of Nigeria and its neighbors to accept and address legitimate grievances of vulnerable populations in areas affected by Boko Haram.

(2) ELEMENTS.—At a minimum, the strategy must address the following elements:

(A) Enhance, pursuant to existing authorities and restrictions, the institutional capacity, including military capabilities, of the Government of Nigeria and partner nations in the region, as appropriate, to counter the threat posed by Boko Haram.

(B) Provide humanitarian support to civilian populations impacted by Boko Haram's activity.

(C) Specific activities through which the United States Government intends to improve and enhance the capacity of Multinational Joint Task Force to Combat Boko Haram partner nations to investigate and prosecute human rights abuses by security forces and promote respect for the rule of law within the military.

(D) A means for assisting Nigeria, and as appropriate, Multinational Joint Task Force to Combat Boko Haram nations, to counter violent extremism, including efforts to address underlying societal factors shown to contribute to the ability of Boko Haram to radicalize and recruit individuals.

(E) A plan to strengthen and promote the rule of law, including by improving the capacity of the civilian police and judicial system in Nigeria, enhancing public safety, and responding to crime (including gender-based violence), while respecting human rights and strengthening accountability measures, including measures to prevent corruption.

(F) Strengthen the long-term capacity of the Government of Nigeria to enhance security for schools such that children are safer and girls seeking an education are better protected, and to combat gender-based violence and gender inequality.

(G) Identify and develop mechanisms for coordinating the implementation of the strategy across the inter-agency and with the Government of Nigeria, regional partners, and other relevant foreign partners.

(H) Identify the resources required to achieve the strategy's objectives.

(b) ASSESSMENT.—The Director of National Intelligence, in consultation with the Secretary of State, shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress an assessment regarding the willingness and capability of the Government of Nigeria and regional partners to implement the strategy required by subsection (a), including the capability gaps, if any, of the government and military forces of Nigeria that would need to be addressed in order to enable the Government of Nigeria and the governments of its partner countries in the region to counter the threat of Boko Haram and to address legitimate grievances of vulnerable populations in areas affected by Boko Haram.

(c) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that lack of economic opportunity and access to education, justice, and other social services contributes to the ability of Boko Haram to radicalize and recruit individuals.

(d) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''appropriate committees of Congress'' means—

(1) the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Appropriations, and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Appropriations, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Lankford amendment at the desk be agreed to, that the committee-reported amendment, as amended, be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 2677) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To require that the Director of National Intelligence assess the capability of the United States Government to help implement the 5-year strategy to counter the regional threat of Boko Haram)

On page 8, strike lines 5 through 16 and insert the following:

(b) ASSESSMENT.—The Director of National Intelligence shall submit, to the appropriate committees of Congress, an assessment regarding—

(1) the willingness and capability of the Government of Nigeria and regional partners to implement the strategy developed under subsection (a), including the capability gaps, if any, of the Government and military forces of Nigeria that would need to be addressed to enable the Government of Nigeria and the governments of its partner countries in the region—

(A) to counter the threat of Boko Haram; and

(B) to address the legitimate grievances of vulnerable populations in areas affected by Boko Haram; and

(2) significant United States intelligence gaps concerning Boko Haram or on the willingness and capacity of the Government of Nigeria and regional partners to implement the strategy developed under subsection (a).

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended, was agreed to.

The bill (S. 1632), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 1632

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. REGIONAL STRATEGY TO ADDRESS THE THREAT POSED BY BOKO HARAM.

(a) STRATEGY REQUIRED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense shall jointly develop and submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a five-year strategy to help enable the Government of Nigeria, members of the Multinational Joint Task Force to Combat Boko Haram (MNJTF) authorized by the African Union, and relevant partners to counter the regional threat of Boko Haram and assist the Government of Nigeria and its neighbors to accept and address legitimate grievances of vulnerable populations in areas affected by Boko Haram.

(2) ELEMENTS.—At a minimum, the strategy must address the following elements:

(A) Enhance, pursuant to existing authorities and restrictions, the institutional capacity, including military capabilities, of the Government of Nigeria and partner nations in the region, as appropriate, to counter the threat posed by Boko Haram.

(B) Provide humanitarian support to civilian populations impacted by Boko Haram's activity.

(C) Specific activities through which the United States Government intends to improve and enhance the capacity of Multinational Joint Task Force to Combat Boko Haram partner nations to investigate and prosecute human rights abuses by security

forces and promote respect for the rule of law within the military.

(D) A means for assisting Nigeria, and as appropriate, Multinational Joint Task Force to Combat Boko Haram nations, to counter violent extremism, including efforts to address underlying societal factors shown to contribute to the ability of Boko Haram to radicalize and recruit individuals.

(E) A plan to strengthen and promote the rule of law, including by improving the capacity of the civilian police and judicial system in Nigeria, enhancing public safety, and responding to crime (including gender-based violence), while respecting human rights and strengthening accountability measures, including measures to prevent corruption.

(F) Strengthen the long-term capacity of the Government of Nigeria to enhance security for schools such that children are safer and girls seeking an education are better protected, and to combat gender-based violence and gender inequality.

(G) Identify and develop mechanisms for coordinating the implementation of the strategy across the inter-agency and with the Government of Nigeria, regional partners, and other relevant foreign partners.

(H) Identify the resources required to achieve the strategy's objectives.

(b) ASSESSMENT.—The Director of National Intelligence shall submit, to the appropriate committees of Congress, an assessment regarding—

(1) the willingness and capability of the Government of Nigeria and regional partners to implement the strategy developed under subsection (a), including the capability gaps, if any, of the Government and military forces of Nigeria that would need to be addressed to enable the Government of Nigeria and the governments of its partner countries in the region—

(A) to counter the threat of Boko Haram; and

(B) to address the legitimate grievances of vulnerable populations in areas affected by Boko Haram; and

(2) significant United States intelligence gaps concerning Boko Haram or on the willingness and capacity of the Government of Nigeria and regional partners to implement the strategy developed under subsection (a).

(c) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that lack of economic opportunity and access to education, justice, and other social services contributes to the ability of Boko Haram to radicalize and recruit individuals.

(d) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''appropriate committees of Congress'' means—

(1) the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Appropriations, and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Appropriations, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives.

ALBUQUERQUE INDIAN SCHOOL LAND TRANSFER ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 194, S. 986.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 986) to require the Secretary of the Interior to take into trust 4 parcels of Federal land for the benefit of certain Indian Pueblos in the State of New Mexico.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 986) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 986

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Albuquerque Indian School Land Transfer Act''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) 19 PUEBLOS.—The term ''19 Pueblos'' means the New Mexico Indian Pueblos of—

(A) Acoma;
(B) Cochiti;
(C) Isleta;
(D) Jemez;
(E) Laguna;
(F) Nambe;
(G) Ohkay Owingeh (San Juan);
(H) Picuris;
(I) Pojoaque;
(J) San Felipe;
(K) San Ildefonso;
(L) Sandia;
(M) Santa Ana;
(N) Santa Clara;
(O) Santo Domingo;
(P) Taos;
(Q) Tesuque;
(R) Zia; and
(S) Zuni.

(2) MAP.—The term ''map'' means the map entitled ''The Town of Albuquerque Grant, Bernalillo County, within Township 10 North, Range 3 East, of the New Mexico Principal Meridian, New Mexico—Metes and Bounds Survey'' and dated August 12, 2011.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means Secretary of the Interior.

SEC. 3. LAND TAKEN INTO TRUST FOR BENEFIT OF 19 PUEBLOS.

(a) ACTION BY SECRETARY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall take into trust all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the Federal land described in subsection (b) for the benefit of the 19 Pueblos immediately after the Secretary determines that the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) have been satisfied regarding the trust acquisition of the Federal land.

(2) ADMINISTRATION.—The Secretary shall—

(A) take such action as the Secretary determines to be necessary to document the transfer under paragraph (1); and

(B) appropriately assign each applicable private and municipal utility and service right or agreement.

(b) DESCRIPTION OF LAND.—The Federal land referred to in subsection (a)(1) is the 4 tracts of Federal land, the combined acreage of which is approximately 11.11 acres, that were historically part of the Albuquerque Indian School, more particularly described as follows:

(1) ABANDONED INDIAN SCHOOL ROAD.—The approximately 0.83 acres located in sec. 7 and sec. 8 of T. 10 N., R. 3 E., of the New Mexico Principal Meridian in Albuquerque, New Mexico, as identified on the map.

(2) SOUTHERN PART TRACT D.—The approximately 6.18 acres located in sec. 7 of T. 10 N., R. 3 E., of the New Mexico Principal Meridian in Albuquerque, New Mexico, as identified on the map.

(3) TRACT 1.—The approximately 0.41 acres located in sec. 7 of T. 10 N., R. 3 E., of the New Mexico Principal Meridian in Albuquerque, New Mexico, as identified on the map.

(4) WESTERN PART TRACT B.—The approximately 3.69 acres located in sec. 7 of T. 10 N., R. 3 E., of the New Mexico Principal Meridian in Albuquerque, New Mexico, as identified on the map.

(c) SURVEY.—The Secretary shall conduct a survey of the Federal land to be transferred consistent with subsection (b) and may make minor corrections to the survey and legal description of the Federal land described in subsection (b) as the Secretary determines to be necessary to correct clerical, typographical, and surveying errors.

(d) USE OF LAND.—The Federal land taken into trust under subsection (a) shall be used for the educational, health, cultural, business, and economic development of the 19 Pueblos.

(e) LIMITATIONS AND CONDITIONS.—The Federal land taken into trust under subsection (a) shall remain subject to any private or municipal encumbrance, right-of-way, restriction, easement of record, or utility service agreement in effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

(f) BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS USE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The 19 Pueblos shall allow the Bureau of Indian Affairs to continue to use the land taken into trust under subsection (a) for the facilities and purposes as in existence on the date of enactment of this Act, in accordance with paragraph (2).

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The use by the Bureau of Indian Affairs under paragraph (1) shall—

(A) be free of any rental charge; and

(B) continue until such time as the Secretary determines there is no further need for the existing Bureau of Indian Affairs facilities.

SEC. 4. EFFECT OF OTHER LAWS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (b), Federal land taken into trust under section 3(a) shall be subject to Federal laws relating to Indian land.

(b) GAMING.—No class I gaming, class II gaming, or class III gaming (as defined in section 4 of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (25 U.S.C. 2703)) shall be carried out on the Federal land taken into trust under section 3(a).

BREAST CANCER RESEARCH STAMP REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 233, S. 1170.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1170) to amend title 39, United States Code, to extend the authority of the United States Postal Service to issue a semipostal to raise funds for breast cancer research, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 1170) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 1170

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Breast Cancer Research Stamp Reauthorization Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF POSTAGE STAMP FOR BREAST CANCER RESEARCH.

Section 414(h) of title 39, United States Code, is amended by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2019''.

SEC. 3. ENSURING THAT FUNDS GENERATED BY SPECIAL POSTAGE STAMP SALES ARE USED FOR BREAST CANCER RESEARCH.

Section 414(c)(1) of title 39, United States Code, is amended in the matter following subparagraph (B) by adding at the end the following: ''An agency that receives amounts from the Postal Service under this paragraph shall use the amounts for breast cancer research.''.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL RETIREMENT SECURITY WEEK

NATIONAL FALLS PREVENTION AWARENESS DAY

HONORING THE LIFE, ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND LEGACY OF CONGRESSMAN LOUIS STOKES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions, which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 263, S. Res. 264, and S. Res. 265.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolutions by title en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 263) supporting the goals and ideals of National Retirement Security Week, including raising public awareness of the various tax-preferred retirement vehicles, increasing personal financial literacy, and engaging the people of the United States on the keys to success in achieving and maintaining retirement security throughout their lifetimes.

A resolution (S. Res. 264) designating September 23, 2015, as ''National Falls Prevention Awareness Day'' to raise awareness and encourage the prevention of falls among older adults.

A resolution (S. Res. 265) honoring the life, accomplishments, and legacy of Congressman Louis Stokes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.''

AUTHORIZING APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE TO ESCORT HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the President of the Senate be authorized to appoint a committee on the part of the Senate to join with a like committee on the part of the House of Representatives to escort His Holiness Pope Francis into the House Chamber for the joint meeting at 10 a.m. on Thursday, September 24, 2015.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 1 p.m., Thursday, September 24; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following leader remarks, the Senate resume consideration of H.J. Res. 61, with the time until 2 p.m. equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; further, that notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture motion filed during today's session with respect to amendment No. 2669 ripen at 2 p.m., Thursday, September 24; finally, that the filing deadline for all first- and second-degree amendments to amendment No. 2669 be at 1:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2015, AT 1 P.M.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:29 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, September 24, 2015, at 1 p.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate September 22, 2015:

NATIONAL FOUNDATION ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

KATHRYN K. MATTHEW, OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES FOR A TERM OF FOUR YEARS.